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QUESTIONS OF THE SOUL.

"All thou would'st learn I will make clear to thee—
No riddle upon my lips, but such straight words,
As friends should use to each other when they talk."

PROMETHEUS.

QUESTIONS OF THE SOUL.

BY

I. T. HECKER.

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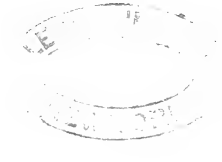

PREFACE.

THE age is out of joint. Men run to and fro to find the truth. The future lies hid in obscurity and thick darkness. The wide world seems afloat. The question, Has man a destiny, and what is it? agitates the souls of all men. It would seem that God had never made known to man his destiny, or that man had missed the way that leads to it. Who will bring the light of truth once more to dawn upon the soul? Truth that will give to man life, energy, and a purpose worthy of his noble and Godlike ca-

pacities? One thing we can truly say of the following sheets; they are not idle speculations. Our heart is in them, and our life's results. That they may be a means to answer life's problem to earnest souls, is our only ambition. With this, knowing that truth is never spoken in vain, we send them forth.

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QUESTIONS OF THE SOUL.

I.

Has Man a Destiny.

"But what am I?
An infant in the night:
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

TENNYSON.

EVERY man that is born into life has for his task to find his destiny, or to make one. This he must accomplish, or be condemned to the greatest of all miseries, the misery of being "conscious of capacities without the proper objects to satisfy them."

The question that agitates the mind of man, as soon as the eye of reason opens, is that of his destiny. The idea of God, himself, and the world around him, strikes him at that moment, as separate and independent facts. The charm that surrounded his innocent childhood is broken; he enters upon a new sphere of life; and, with feelings of surprise, he asks: "Who am I?" "Whence did I come?" "Whither do I tend?" "Who is God?" "What are my relations to God? to man? to the world around me?" "Have I a destiny? A work to do? What is it? And where? or is all ruled by Fate? or left to what men call Chance?

"No When,—no Where,—no How, but that we are,
And nought besides!"*

These, and similar questions, are the first to spring up at the dawn of reason, in the minds of those who have no fixed notions of religion. Alas! this is the condition, deny it who may, of the great mass of American youth.

* Milnes.

A shrewd observer of men, one who ranks high among our poets, has stated this fact in his quaint way in the following lines :—

"I saw men go up and down,
In the country and the town,
With this prayer upon their neck,—
'Judgment and a judge we seek.'
Not to monarchs they repair,
Nor to learned jurist's chair;
But they hurry to their peers,
To their kinsfolk and their dears;
Louder than with speech they pray,—
'What am I? Companion, say!'" *

These questions we cannot set aside if we would; and, unanswered, they fasten upon the mind and consume the life of the heart, like the vultures that fed upon the vitals of the rock-bound Prometheus. Moreover, we would not set them aside if we had the power, for the highest prerogative of man's reason is, to know his destiny; and his noble energies were not given to be wasted or misspent, but to be directed to the fulfilment of it.

First of all, then, the question of our des-

* Emerson.

tiny must be met and settled, and that, too, satisfactorily to the intellect and heart. Till this is done, it is idle and nonsensical to tell man to act. You tell him to act, and he will reply: "But how can we act, when we see no purpose in our actions? How can we act, when we see no end worth acting for? Rather than act for such ends as men commonly do, we would let our shoulders fall from their sockets, and our arms with their bones be broken! For:—

'We were not born
To sink our finer feelings in the dust;
And better to the grave with feelings torn,
So in our steps stride truth and honest trust
In the great love of things, than to be slaves
To forms, whose ringing sides each stroke we give
Stamps with a hollower want. Yes, to our graves
Hurry, before we in the heaven's look live,
Strangers to our best thoughts, and fearing men,
And fearing death, and to be born again.'" *

If you cannot act, then love. "But how can we love when a deeper insight tells us, that to love is only to be deceived? To love

* W. E. Channing.

till the inmost want of the soul is stilled, is but an act of self-deception, ending in greater pain and bitterer want. Mock us no longer by telling us to love. Can two voids make a fulness? Can two wants give bliss? Can two deficiencies make a whole and perfect result? 'Madly and in vain do two hearts beat to mingle and be a whole.'

"We would love, yes, this is precisely what we would do, but love what will answer to our whole nature, not merely to a part, and that part by no means the most noble. For he

'Who drinks of Cupid's nectar cup,
Loveth downwards, and not up.' *

And rather than this, our soul chooseth hanging and our bones death."

Oh! is it not a subject of despair for the soul, when we cannot find in ourselves, nor in any other, nor in all society, the light we need to solve life's mystery, the Destiny of Man! If death could give us any clue, who would not make the venture, and say:—

* Emerson.

"Lay thy loving wings
In death upon me,—if that way alone
Thy great Creation-thought thou will'st to me make known."*

Such is the utterance of the soul when it is moved by some unknown influence from the centre and basis of common life, and is seeking for another and a higher one, to rest upon.

But what is this that torments the soul? Has life no purpose? Has man no task to accomplish?

Are we

"But eddies of the dust,
Uplifted by the blast and whirled
Along the highway of the world
A moment only, then to fall
Back to a common level all,
At the subsiding of the gust!"†

Is all around us chaos as it seems, and are we brought forth from darkness into reason's light, only to doubt and perchance despair?

"And is this all that man can claim?
Is this our longing's final aim?

* Milnes. † Longfellow.

To be like all things round,—no more
Than pebbles cast on time's great shore?"*

Not always does doubt spring from deficiency, in earnest hearts, it is but another form of faith and prayer. Listen to one who has felt keenly the nobler impulses of the soul, who has had brilliant dreams of life and drunk dry the cup of woe.

"What you find to your sorrow, is the star of hope. Your doubts are 'The stamp and signet of a most perfect life.' There is in life a purpose; one equal to all the wants of the heart and the capacities of the soul; a purpose that will give to the heart a perpetual freshness of youth, to the mind an ever increasing vision of beauty, and to the will a divine basis for action. And this purpose can be yours."

Believe it! or trust one who has been where you are, and who speaks to you now, not of day dreams, but of actualities, of hopes realized, and of aims accomplished; one who can say,

* Sterling.

"What once I dreamt not, now is true,
More lovely sights around me rise." *

Lo! in the fields the yellow grain, the ripening fruit, the full-blown rose, how full of life! how perfect! how beautiful! And shall man, the crowning piece of God's workmanship, walk with aimless feet? Shall he be

"Weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?" †

No; man has a destiny, and, to corrupt, to enfeeble, or to abandon those instincts, faculties, and activities, which God has given to him whereby to reach his destiny, this is the soul's suicide; this, and this alone, is sin.

Man has a destiny, and his only evil is to deviate from it; and not to be able to act in accordance with his destiny, is the greatest of all miseries; this is, in every sense of the word, to be damned; this is the greatest torment of hell. Man has a destiny, and man's highest

* Sterling. † Tennyson.

good, his life, his happiness, and true being's bliss, is in nothing else than in the fulfilment of his destiny ; it is in this, that his beatitude and heaven consist.

Man has a destiny, what is it ?

II.

What is Man's Destiny.

"Oh thou great Movement of the Universe,
Or Change, or flight of Time, for ye are one!
That bearest, silently, this visible scene
Into night's shadow and the streaming rays
Of starlight, whither art thou bearing me?
I feel the mighty current sweep me on,
Yet know not whither."

BRYANT.

IS it not high time that an answer to the question of Man's Destiny should be given, or attempted, when we see our sanitary institutions and asylums filled with victims whose minds have been overwrought with false excitement, or who have become dupes of a diabolical mysticism? and the youths of our land balancing, like Hamlet or Werther, upon the chances

of suicide to lift up the veil, and discover to them the meaning and mystery of life! But who will tell us

"The fate of the man child,
The meaning of man?" *

Perhaps the many-sided Goethe, he, from whom "the students of our country are to learn," so says his translator, "how to realize their lofty aspirations." Listen to his "Song of Life," which is after all, in its main features, but his own Curriculum Vitæ :—

"I've set my heart upon nothing you see;
Hurrah!
And so the world goes well with me.
And who has the mind to be fellow of mine,
Why, let him take hold and help me drain
These mouldy lees of wine.

"I set my heart first upon wealth,
Hurrah!
And bartered away my peace and health,
But, ah!
The slippery change went about like air,
And when I had clutched me a handful here
Away it went there.

* Emerson.

"I set my heart upon woman next,
Hurrah!
For her sweet sake was oft perplexed,
But, ah!
The False one looked for a daintier lot,
The Constant one wearied me out and out,
The Best was not easily got.

"I set my heart upon travels grand,
Hurrah!
And spurned our plain, old Fatherland;
But, ah!
Naught seemed to be just the thing it should,
Most comfortless bed, and indifferent food,
My tastes misunderstood.

"I set my heart upon sounding fame;
Hurrah!
And, lo! I'm eclipsed by some upstart's name;
But, ah!
When in public life I loomed quite high,
The folks that passed me would look awry;
Their very worst friend was I.

"And then I set my heart upon war,
Hurrah!
We gained some battles with éclat,
Hurrah!
We troubled the foe with sword and flame,
(And some of our friends fared quite the same,)
I lost a leg for fame.

"Now I've set my heart upon nothing you see;
Hurrah!
And the whole, wide world belongs to me,
Hurrah!
The feast begins to run low no doubt,
But at the old cask we'll have one good bout,
Come, drink the lees all out."

Such is the end of life, according to the many-sided Goethe, the Father of Modern Transcendentalism; this great German, with his broad and deep experience. Thus, life is a round of sensual pleasures and defeated aims, and the idea of a deeper purpose is tossed off with a cup of wine and a hurrah!

Goethe's compeer, Schiller, was a man of a more earnest mould, and of whom also, the same translator remarks, the students of our country are to learn "lofty aspirations." Schiller makes life's purpose to be, freedom, political freedom. In "Don Carlos," Schiller has given us, as his biographer remarks, a representative of himself in the Marquis de Posa. The Marquis is the beau-ideal of a red-republican. In speaking to the king of Spain, he says:

> "Be to us
> A pattern of the Everlasting and the True!
> Never, never, did a mortal hold so much,
> To use it so divinely. All the kings
> Of Europe reverence the name of Spain;
> Go on in front of all the kings of Europe!
> One movement of your pen, and new created
> Is the earth. Say but, let there be freedom!"

Having aided by his writings the tendencies that brought about the French Revolution of '98, Schiller retired shrinking from its horrors to Jena, as professor of belles-lettres, working to "create beauty, and strew heavenly seeds through the world," as he expresses it, by his plays and poems.

Both of these great men were unfaithful to man's true destiny, for they wasted and debased in their lives those energies which were given for a divine purpose.

Shall we ask the German philosophers, or their French transcribers, the meaning of man? Our time would be better spent in asking the passers-by in our streets; for they tell us, that the highest problem in philosophy is to establish what the commonest and most illiterate people hold as an undisputed fact!

In England we have one only who has spoken, but he is a blind worshipper of German philosophism and French revolutions. He has ventured to give a solution to man's destiny. "It is," so says Mr. Thomas Carlyle, for it is he who speaks, "to make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier;—more blessed, less accursed! This is work for a God!" Precisely so; but what he tells us man ought to do, is precisely what man feels that he is unable to do, and what he feels needs to be done for him,—that is, to make him wiser, better, happier, more blessed; "this is, indeed, work for a God." But more of this hereafter.

Shall we look at home for some one to unriddle the meaning of man? Perhaps our philosophers and poets of the East, the transcendentalists, will give us an answer. What says Mr. Emerson, the Corypheus of Transcendentalism, to the problem of life?

> "Alas! the sprite that haunts us
> Deceives our rash desire;

It whispers of the glorious gods,
And leaves us in the mire.

"We cannot learn the cipher
That's writ upon the wall;
Stars help us by a mystery
Which we could never spell.

"If but the hero knew it,
The world would blush in flame,
The sage, tell he but the secret,
Would hang his head in shame.

"But our brothers have not read it,
Not one has found the key;
And henceforth we are comforted—
We are *but such* as they!"

A very poor comfort that, we would say, which springs from the thought that we are all in the dark, and there is no hope for even one to find his way out; and this comes, above all, with ill grace from one, to whom, if his own account be true, nature has made all things clear.

"But thou, my Votary, weepest thou?
I taught thy heart beyond the reach
Of ritual, Bible, or of speech;

Wrote on thy mind's transparent table
As far as the incommunicable:
Taught thee each private sign to raise,
Lit by the super-solar blaze.
Past utterance and past belief,
And past the blasphemy of grief,
The mysteries of nature's heart;
And though no muse can these impart,
Throb thine with nature's throbbing breast,
And all is clear from east to west."

We are not a little surprised how one who has been taught so much, and to whom all things have been made so clear, should still be left in the "mire," in regard to the mystery of life. We are, we confess, a little suspicious, that that nature which taught this Votary "beyond the reach of ritual, bible, or of speech!" was, no nature at all, but self. And the super-solar blaze he speaks of was a certain kind of light that usually leads men into "the mire," called "will-o'-the-wisp." But these men with a false imagination serve only to make things obscure which are clear. There is

"No man born into the world whose work
Is not born with him." *

* Lowell.

A clear and definite work, and not a vague, dreamy, doubtful future, which

> "Wastes down in feeling's empty strife,
> And dies in dreaming's sickly mood."*

But where will you seek to find man's destiny? Will you seek for it in nature? What does nature teach you, who can

> "The bird language rightly spell,
> And what roses say so well?"†

The rose, the birds, the sea, the stars, the heavens, in tones of thunder tell you—"Mortal man, life's secret is not here."

> "Nature, our sweet mother,
> Can no balm impart,
> For she too is sick with all the self-same smart."‡

Nature is less than man. She cannot meet the inmost want of the soul; though in her bosom dwell truth, peace, and love.

> "That type of perfect in his mind,
> In nature can he nowhere find."§

* Sterling. † Emerson. ‡ Milnes. § Tennyson.

You may, if oft you commune with nature, be led to exclaim with one of her votaries—"Oh, this bright spring morning makes me feel as if I would clasp the whole world in one embrace of love;" but you would be forced to add with this fair soul, if truthful to yourself, "And yet it brings with it a longing for something, I do not know what it is; what is it? Nature, like a child, gives all she has, and yet she cannot satisfy the want of man's heart. Could you read her aright, she proclaims her own insufficiency. She says to man, "Yours is a higher destiny!"

Man has a destiny, and where will you seek it? In the world? in the world's wealth? in its praises? in its pleasures? in its honors? in its splendor? in its power? Having drunk to its dregs the cup which the world presents to your lips, you will find written at the bottom, "Fool, fool, thrice fool! You have sought in vain—your hands are empty—your life is bankrupt!"

"While in the bud it lay concealed,
The world appeared a boundless scene,

What have the opening leaves revealed?
How little! and that little mean." *

Man has a destiny, and will you seek it in man? In man's friendship, sympathy, or love? But man answers to man; heart answers to heart, "We, too, seek."

"Have I a lover
Who is noble and free?
I would he were nobler
Than to love me!" †

Man is more than man; and the love that man's heart can give only serves to make the heart's craving of love felt more intensely, and to increase its despair of love.

Nature, the world, and man, tell the soul: "Be not deceived—waste not your time. There is in man something which no created thing, no creature, not the whole universe of things can satisfy!"

The end and ground of all seeking is God, and the soul finds no rest till it finds God, and

* Schiller. † Emerson.

reposes on that bosom, out of which its life was first breathed forth! What else is the heart's deep sigh after happiness,

"But the breath of God
Still moving in us?" *

* Lowell.

III.

Man's Dignity.

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"—SHAKESPEARE.

COME to it we must, if not before, at least at the moment of death, that God, and God alone, is all our best having, our repose, the complete and perfect answer to man's whole being.

Shall we ask the intelligence of man what it demands? Its answer is: "To know, to know the truth; to know the whole truth; the primal and infinite truth;—to know God!"

Shall we ask the heart of man the end of

all its desires? It will answer: "To love, to love the good; to love the supreme and infinite good;—to love God and all things else because of some reflect of God!" Shall we ask the will of man its purpose? It will reply: "To act; to act in accordance with the primal truth for the Supreme Good; to do God's will."

The head, the heart, the hand of man with one voice proclaim that the end of man is to know, to love, to live for God! This is God's own destiny. Man's destiny, therefore, is God-like. For God created man in his "own image and likeness!"

The destiny of the soul, then, is to come to God; to be one with God. To live, is to think for God, to love for God, to act for God.

A truthful life is one in which all the thoughts of the mind, all the affections of the heart, all the acts of the will, are directed to God. A truthful life is one in which all the faculties and energies of the soul tend to God.

But God's happiness is one and the same with his life. Man, therefore, living the same life as God, participates in God's happiness.

and his life here is the beginning of his eternal beatitude hereafter.

What higher end can be conceived than that of God; what more beautiful life can be imagined than that of God; what more blissful can be thought of, than the happiness of God?

Say not that in making God "the limit where all our wishes end," we isolate man from nature and humanity? Is not God in nature? in humanity? in all things? If so, then to see God is to see and know all things eminently;—to love God and be one with him, is to love and be one with all things most intimately;—to do God's will, is to do every thing and serve all things most effectually. With God and one with God, man, like God, embraces all, and is eminently practical; without God, he is incomplete and his actions ineffectual.

We may be told that this is all poetry, rhapsody, moonshine, smoke, and will, like

"Yon wavering column, perish!"*

* Schiller.

To some these thoughts may appear so ; the world is wide, and leaving such by the way, we say this is

> "A truth too vast for spirits lost in sloth,
> By self-indulgence marr'd of noble growth,
> Who bear about, in impotence and shame,
> Their human reason's visionary name." *

But to those who feel within their hearts the strivings of a noble enterprise, we have a word of hope. Ye, whose thoughts make the world a solitude, and who feel a bliss by you not understood, we have a word of hope. Ye, to whom God has given generous views of life and courage to act for Eternity ; to you we have a word of hope, and, with assurance, say :—

> "These are not dreams for laughter.
> Now but shoots, these trees hereafter
> Shall with fruit refresh us." †

* Sterling. † Goethe.

IV.

Special Destiny.

"Could I find a path to follow,
Ah, how glad I were, and blest!"

SCHILLER.

MAN not only has a destiny, but each individual of the race has a special destiny, a definite work to do; and this work is a great, an important, a divine work. For, whatever God appoints, is great,—great in its purpose, important in its accomplishment, divine in its results. At the same time that God gave to each soul a definite work to do, and marked out for it a special path in life, which, following faithfully, it will attain its beatitude, he gave also to the soul the strength, courage, talent, grace to do

the work well ; and more, to do it with a certain degree of facility and pleasure.

Moments come to every soul when the iron hand of its destiny is laid upon it with an irresistible power. A higher power directs it, and it is an awful moment when the soul feels, for the first time, that it is under an influence that it cannot control, and all before it is dark :

> "My will is bondsman to the dark,
> I sit within a helmless bark." *

When the world loses all its charms, the sweet ties of human friendship are snapped asunder ; the heart's affections are torn up by their roots with a ruthless hand, and the soul, in throes of agony, cries out to its invisible antagonist, "'Tis o'er."

One thing it knows amidst its darkness, and that is, that to resist the power that leads it on, would be its death. One thing it is sure of, amidst its uncertainties, that the path in which it has entered will terminate in a plenitude of life ; and exclaims,

* Tennyson.

"How strangely Fate my feet is leading;
And, ah! I feel it soon or late,
Much more awaits me, all unheeding." *

Yielding at length with confidence to its invisible guide, it says;

"Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

"I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile. †

* Goethe. † Dr. Newman.

And among those who have a marked destiny, there is a class of souls that cannot satisfy their natures with the common modes of life. A hidden principle leads them to seek a better and more spiritual life. The longing after the infinite predominates in these souls, and all other ties must be loosed and sacrificed, if need be, to its growth and full development.

Many thoughts come to these souls which stretch far beyond the limits of man's reason; noble hopes and aspirations, heroic deeds of sacrifice, and bright dreams of a holy life, awake them in their midnight slumbers, indicating a life beyond mere human strength. Such are the hidden ways of God's providence in preparing that class of souls which he has chosen to do a great work, to live above the race and the common life of men, and to act upon society with a divine energy.

Listen to thoughts which not unfrequently occupy their minds, and absorb all their energies.

"All ties that are not divine must be severed. Not only Jesus's soul, but every soul that has a divine destiny, at some epoch of its life, asks from its depths, Who is my father? my mother? my brother? my sister? my

friend? What are they to me? What am I to them? Can they

> 'Raise me when by sorrow bound,
> And follow me to death's dark gate?' *

I would be free, and stand alone in eternal relations with others, and all things around me. What must go at death, why not now? Man should be master of necessity. We say it,—let him who can receive it,—there is no other truth in life than in living for eternity.

"You talk to me of home, and I have nothing in my heart that answers to the meaning of the word. My home is every where and nowhere—my home is in my own bosom, in my own consciousness. The earth is my bed, a rock is my pillow, the heaven my canopy, the fruit of the trees and the water of the brook my meat and drink.

> "'I wander 'mid the dewy flowers,
> And from the superfluous wealth
> Of the wood bushes, pluck at will
> Wholesome and delicate food,
> And at the silvery fountain quench my thirst.' †

* Schiller. † Goethe.

"Oh, talk to me no longer of a home, it is mockery; all that goes to make a home from me is gone, and gone for ever,

> "'My peace is hence,
> My heart is lone,
> My rest for aye,
> And ever gone.'*

"Talk not to me of home,—there is on earth no home."

Questions, too, that strike at the very root of things, and the foundation of society, agitate these souls, to which they find no answer. Who will answer when they ask:

"Tell me, can he who accumulates more than he daily needs, be a true follower of Him who bade his disciples to pray only for their 'daily bread?'

"Can he who amasses wealth be a faithful follower of Him who had nowhere to lay his head, who blessed the poor and cursed the rich, and taught his disciples not to take thought of the morrow, for such was the manner of heathens? Or, can he who gains wealth by means

* Goethe.

of the industry of his fellows, be a sincere believer in Him who made it a mark of discipleship, to love one's neighbor as one's self?

"Is that loving one's neighbor as one's self, the precept which he emphatically said is 'my precept,' when men make of their fellow-men, servants, drudges, slaves, and consider them unfit to sit with them at their tables, or mingle with them in their drawing-rooms?

"Why should not every sincere believer in Christianity renounce all his possessions, abandon the world, deny himself all sensual gratifications, and devote all his energies to the relief of the poor, the down-trodden, those in prison, and labor for the extinction of vice, crime and error, like the Divine Master?

"We tell the world that we despise its wealth, we detest its pleasures, we contemn its maxims, and are heedless of its opinions, whether of praise or blame. We say not this in a sour, crabbed, and angry spirit, but in pity, commiseration, love. Yes,

> "'Happy he, who hating none,
> Leaves the world's dull noise.'"*

* Goethe.

Such thoughts come to those minds, and such questions occupy the hearts of those who have not altogether lost their primal rectitude and virginal purity. And they are so constituted and natured, that, until they are settled, no other thought, no other object, can divert their attention.

There are those who will say that such thoughts are vain and visionary, and those questionings idle and dangerous; that such a life is a dream, an impossibility; and add, that

> "Honest wills at first like thine,
> After the faint resistance of an hour,
> Yield themselves up half-willing prisoners,
> Soon to be won by golden-guileful tongues,
> To do blithe service in the cause of Sin."*

We reply, that our

> "Faith is large in Time
> And that which shapes it to some perfect end."†

And we would rather go and hide ourselves in the wild and savage forests, and live upon dry roots and water, than profane a soul with its

* Milnes. † Tennyson.

energies given for noble aims and divine purposes. Rather would we starve here, and die on the spot, than accept what our higher destiny condemns, for is it not better than to lose one's life, to save it dying ?

> "For this losing is true dying;
> This is lordly man's down-lying." *

No ; we live, and we shall live, in spite of all the powers of hell. And, even after death has spent itself upon us, we shall live for that which is eternal, true, divine !

> "Here am I, here will I remain
> For ever to myself soothfast." *

> "Souls know no conquerors." †

* Emerson. † Dryden.

V.

Continuation.

"I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joys that will not cease,
Pure graces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams."

TENNYSON.

THERE is no doubt that there always has been, and is now, a class of minds, and not a small class, of whom the description in the foregoing pages, is most truthful. It is no fancy of ours, but a fact of history, and of man's earliest history, that there are minds so gifted and divinely formed, that they cannot find their happiness in the gratification of sensual appe-

tites, nor in the common pursuits and aims of men. It is true that sin has depraved and corrupted man's nature, but not to such an extent as to efface from his mind all idea of God. It is from the indistinct notion that man still retains of God, that the desire for beatitude springs up in the heart; but he has lost the knowledge of the path which leads to his beatitude,—to God. This, Mr. Emerson expresses, when he says :—

> "The fiend that man harries
> Is love for the Best.
> * * * *
> Whose soul sees the perfect
> Which his eyes seek in vain."

Plato mentions in his Republic this class of souls. He divides its citizens into three classes of men. The first of which he compares to iron, the second to silver, and the third to gold. The last he calls the priests of the Race. Plotinus in his treatise "On Intellectual Ideas and Being," gives us a description of the third class, spoken of by Plato. "The first class," he says, "is given to sensual pleasures, the second to social and other political virtues, the third

class is composed of the race of divine men, who, through a more excellent power, and with piercing eyes, acutely perceive supernal light, to the vision of which they raise themselves, above the clouds of darkness, as it were, of this lower world, and there abiding, despise every thing in the region of sense; being no otherwise delighted with its place, which is truly and properly their own, than he who, after many wanderings, is at length restored to his lawful and native land." Some of the most interesting chapters of history are those which give us an account of the several efforts that men have made to realize this divine life. Let us take history, and open her pages, and listen to what she has to tell us on this interesting topic of man's aspirations and efforts after a more spiritual life.

Pythagoras, one of the most celebrated of ancient philosophers, being exiled from Samos, took refuge in Magna Græcia, and found an asylum in the city of Crotona. Preceded by a brilliant reputation, he was received with enthusiasm, and, in a short time, the number of his disciples forced him to forget his native land.

The sage profited by these favorable circumstances, to realize a project that he had conceived, it is said, during his travels in Egypt. He reunited his most devoted disciples, and persuaded them that the best means of attaining perfection, consisted in submitting themselves to a uniform and common rule of life, which determined their employments during every part of the day, and regulated also their intellectual occupations and physical exercises. Such was the origin of the famous *Institution of Pythagoras.*

A vast building received the first disciples, and Pythagoras himself directed the whole establishment. A life in common was practised in all its details and with all its consequences. Clothing, food, instruction, pleasures, religious ceremonies, gymnastic exercises ; all were uniform and alike ; only at the same table, no more than ten of the brethren were allowed to be seated, in order that their friendship might be more intimate, and their conversation less boisterous.

It is supposed by some writers, that they lived in separate cells, apart, like anchorites, upon

bread, vegetables, and a little honey; flesh meat was severely prohibited; and each one helped, from his own private means, to support the community.

Long and severe trials preceded admission into the Institution. Several years of painful toil and silence was the test required, to prove the constancy, discretion, and patience of the candidate. And yet it is matter of historical certainty, that in spite of these rigors, the élite of the youth pressed around the doors of the Institution for admission, and that a few years sufficed to endow the principal cities of Sicily and Greece proper, with establishments like that of Crotona, all of which were bound by the bonds of fraternity; and all received with the same veneration, the rule of their Founder.

It was not the intention of Pythagoras to submit the whole of society to the rules which he had framed for certain privileged souls, but to establish in every important city a community of such as were called to seek perfection, and by their intellectual gifts were qualified to

devote themselves to the study of religious and social questions.

The Institution of Pythagoras had not a long duration. In his old age, the philosopher had the sorrow to see with his own eyes, the fall, one after the other, of the establishments which he had founded with so much effort, and which he believed destined to perpetuate the work. And, as a finale, Pythagoras himself was driven from Crotona, and assassinated at Metapontum about the year 500, before Christ.

The same desire to live a higher and more spiritual life expressed itself in a striking manner among the Jews.

At the time of the Machabees, 180 years before Jesus Christ, on the western coast of the Dead Sea, the Essenians, a sect of Jews, made the doctrine of community of goods and a life in common, a religious and social dogma. Lodged under the same roof, taking meals at the same table, clothed with the same dress; they observed celibacy and lived in continence. Contemning riches, rejecting the use of the precious metals, given wholly to the meditation of religious truth, poor, subsisting by the

labor of their hands, the Essenians were content with one meal a day, and that of bread and vegetables. To renounce pleasure, ambition, glory ; to overcome the passions, to subjugate the senses, to raise one's self above the wants of the body ; to despise the advantages which others seek and admire ; such was, in the eyes of the Essenians, the ideal of human perfection.

They filled the void that death and disaffection made in their ranks by infants, who had been committed to their care. Rarely they admitted adults, and never, without having proved them by rude trials and a three years' novitiate. All had to obey, with entire submission, their superior, who was elected by the community.

Two centuries later and the Jewish sect, the Therapeutæ, spread themselves in Asia Minor and in Egypt, especially in the environs of Alexandria. Sprung from the Essenians, the Therapeutæ increased the rigor of their primitive rule. They occupied separate cells, placed a short distance apart.

They prayed twice a day at the rising and

the setting sun. It was only after the going down of this orb that they allowed themselves to take the single repast of the day, and that composed of bread and salt, seasoned with hyssop. Philo tells us that the Therapeutæ renounced their families, their friends, their possessions, and their country, to give themselves entirely to the exercise of prayer and contemplation. Their only intellectual labor consisted in composing hymns, and finding out the sense of the mystic expressions and allegories that are contained in the books of Moses, the Prophets and Psalms. The account given by Philo concerning the community of Therapeutæ is full of interest.

"They separate themselves from the state of society around them. After having left their riches, their parents, their friends, they retire into some solitary place, not from hatred of their fellow-men, but in order to give themselves to a peaceful life, to the adoration of God and the contemplation of nature.

"Their houses are surrounded with gardens, situated in healthy localities on the slope of a hill; they choose their locations near enough

to each other not to be deprived of mutual succor; and the hills offer them a protection against the rigors of the season. The interior of their houses is divided into little cells, into which each member is allowed to take nothing but the books of the law, the prophets, hymns, and other works of this nature. The Therapeutæ receive among them females advanced in age, who have lived in a state of celibacy. At the rising of the sun they say prayers to obtain the blessing of a happy day; when the sun sets they pray again, that their souls discharged of the weight of exterior things, may become more worthy to be elevated to the pure truth. The time from morning till night is filled by meditation on the books of the law; they consider them as a living being, the precepts of which serve the body, while the allegorical, or interior meaning, serves the soul. The most ancient of their sect have left them many commentaries on the allegories. They endeavor to increase these in the same spirit, adding to them hymns of their own composition, always in honor of God, and in solemn and serious rhythm. During six days the

Therapeutæ do not leave their dwellings, but the seventh day they meet in a public assembly, to communicate their reflections. The women are separated from the common room, following the custom of the Jews, by a partition, which permits them to hear all that is said, without being seen. The sobriety of the Therapeutæ surpasses all that is related of the Pythagoreans; they take every day and after the setting of the sun, but one meal, composed of bread, some roots and salt. They often remain many days without taking any food whatever. The most singular of their feasts is the one which happens every seventh year; the fraternal banquet does not alter in its habitual solemnities, but women take part in it, and the festival is terminated by choirs with a sacred dance. These choirs have for their object to recall the ancient dance on the banks of the Red Sea, after the deliverance of the children of Israel. They form also a living image of the choirs and celestial harmonies."

The Buddhists in India had their monasteries filled with men who practised the most

severe penance, and lived a life of the most rigorous poverty. And even at the present day oriental Asia is covered with monasteries, of which PP. Huc and Gabet have given a most interesting description, in their travels in Tartary and Thibet.

What does all this prove, but that certain souls are so constituted that the common life and objects of men have no attractions for them; they look for nobler modes of being and a more spiritual life, and say

> "Arise and fly
> The reeling Faun, the sensual feast.
> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die." *

Zoroaster, Confucius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, Buddha, stand out as types of this class of souls.

The history and increase of these privileged souls under the influence of Christianity, is a point that will be treated of hereafter. We have said that this class is a numerous one, and surely it was so among the civilized hea-

* Tennyson.

then nations ; and we add, that this class of persons is large, and larger here in the United States than in any other Protestant country.

The reasons and proofs of this will be found in the next chapter.

VI.

Continuation.

"And 'tis the worst despair to know,
By pangs within my bosom aching,
How deep in each the root of woe,
How many a heart is slowly breaking."

STERLING.

THERE is a large class of persons in the United States who look for and seek a more spiritual and earnest life. There is scarcely an American family which will not testify to the truth of this statement, not only as a present fact but as a part of its history, by the efforts of some one or more of its members to realize such a life. One might almost say that this desire, after a more spiritual life, is one of the chief characteristics of the American people.

For, although we are proverbial for our thriftiness, especially the people of the Middle and Eastern States, yet we find few, if any, among our own population, who seek money for the purpose of hoarding it; it is sought, almost always, as a means to something better and more noble.

There are few among us who have not felt, at times, that life should be an uninterrupted act of piety; that our deeds, to be true, should be acts of worship; that what is not directed to God, is lost, profane, if not sinful. We know it, and speak not at random, when we say, that a large class of our people are earnest, serious-minded, and dissatisfied at heart with the life around them, and are unwilling "to decline on a range of lower feelings." They are eager, anxious, restless to be freed, and to live a better and more spiritual life, and hence they grasp and catch at any enterprise, scheme, theory, or doctrine, however absurd, so long as it promises to discover to them the secrets of spiritual life, or to afford them the means to live it.

But some of the reasons why this class of

souls is more numerous in this country than among any other Protestant people, may be distinctly stated.

Our first reason may be called a political and economical one. To be freed from the cares and toils of the common duties of life is necessary to the development of the nobler powers of the soul. Here in the United States, competence is more easily acquired than in any other land, thanks to our political institutions and the advantages of our country; hence, those who feel strongly called to live a higher life have the leisure so necessary to their growth and development.

Many, in whom under less favorable circumstances, all instinct of a diviner life would be stifled and trodden out, here come to a full consciousness of their nobler powers and true destiny.

Another reason, and one which may be called geographical, is, the nature and state of our country. It is not enough to be freed from care and toil for the development of our secret powers and aspirations after a purer and holier life —more is needed—silence, solitude is needed.

Our country presents these to us with a lavish hand, and on the grandest scale, in her deep forests, her vast prairies, in her unexplored regions and uncultivated lands; these, with our sparse population, force a great part of our people to silence and into solitude. And these conditions give quiet and tranquillity to the mind, qualities which conduce, and so to speak, provoke man to the meditation and contemplation of his own nature, his destiny, and of God. For solitude gives birth to our nobler impulses, and nature rightly viewed leads upwards step by step, as it were, to our common Author, in whom all secrets are opened to our view.

Such, and many such souls there are, who, "bold with divine affections" and "filled with mighty hopes," have endeavored to realize a better, purer and holier life, in our days and in our land. Among many such noble attempts, we shall give an account of two or three, as types and representatives of the tendencies of that class of men who would live and consecrate their lives to divine purposes.

VII.

Brook Farm.

"To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier;—more blessed, less accursed! This is work for a God."

CARLYLE.

THIS thought has occupied the souls of many, and several generous and heroic efforts have been made to realize and accomplish such a work. We have thought it best and more interesting to the reader, to let those who were engaged in these movements speak for themselves. Let us first give an idea of the location of Brook Farm, that what follows may be better understood.

Brook Farm was situated at West Roxbury,

about eight miles from the city of Boston. The place is one of great natural beauty, and the whole landscape is so rich and varied as to attract the notice even of casual visitors. The farm consisted of about two hundred acres of land, of as good quality as any in the neighborhood of Boston. Such was, in a few words, the locality of Brook Farm.

"No man amongst us," says a writer, in speaking of the founder of Brook Farm, "is better acquainted with the various plans of world-reform which have been projected, from Plato's Republic to Fourier's Phalanx; but this establishment seems to be the result, not of his theorizing, but of a simple want of his, as a man and a Christian. He felt himself unable, in the existing social organization, to practise always according to his conceptions of Christianity. He could not maintain with his brethren those relations of love and equality which he felt were also needful to him for his own intellectual and moral growth and well-being. Moved by this feeling, he sought to create around him the circumstances which would respond to it, enable him to worship

God and love his brother; and to love his brother in a truly Christian manner. A few men and women, of like views and feelings, grouped themselves around him, not as their master, but as their friend and brother; and the community of Brook Farm was established. The views and feelings, and wants of these men and women, are those of the great mass of all Christian communities;—the desire to realize the Christian Ideal." *

Another writer, speaking of those who were engaged in the movement at Brook Farm, says: "They considered the possibility of making such industrial, social, and educational arrangements, as would simply promote economy, combine leisure for study with healthful and honest toil, avert collisions of caste, equalize refinements, awaken generous affections, diffuse courtesy, and sweeten and sanctify life as a whole." †

A visitor to the community says: "There are seventeen associates; by means of the Farm they are able to pay the interest of the debt on the

* O. K. Brownson. † Wm. H. Channing.

Farm, and to feed themselves, although there are seventy people already there, and the number will be one hundred in the course of the summer. They prefer to sacrifice man's convenience to endangering the social and ideal character of their company. Every body works and studies, and so the children work and study from imitation, and in spirit. Teachers, scholars, all work. As all eat together, they change their dress for their meals ; and so after tea, they are all ready for grouping in the parlors, or in the library, or in the music-room ; or they can go to their private rooms, or into the woods." The writer concludes the account, from which the foregoing are but fragments, by saying, "I do not seem to myself to have told you a moiety of the good which I saw. I have only indicated some of it. But is it not enough to justify me in saying they have succeeded ? It seems to me, if their highest objects were appreciated, they would challenge some of that devotedness which makes the Sisters of Charity throw large fortunes into their institutions, and give themselves body and soul to its duties. Only in America, I think, could such a community have so succeeded as

I have described, composed of persons coming by chance, as it were, from all circumstances of life, and united only by a common idea. It is truly a most religious life. They have succeeded, because they are the children of a government, the ideal of which is the same as their own, although, as a mass, we are unconscious of it; so little do we understand our high vocation, and act up to it."

That they were actuated by noble hopes, a Christian spirit, and feelings of self-sacrifice, the following, from one who was deeply and wholly devoted to this remarkable enterprise, fully shows. He says: "In the city I should pine like an imprisoned bird, and I fear I should grow blind to the visions of loveliness and glory which the future promises to humanity. I long for action which in future shall realize the prophecies, fulfil the Apocalypse, bring the New Jerusalem down from heaven to earth, and collect the faithful into a true and holy brotherhood. To attain this consummation so devoutly to be wished, I would eat no flesh, I would drink no wine while the world lasted; I would become a devoted ascetic.

But to what end is all speculation, all dreaming, all questioning, but to advance humanity, to bring forward the manifestation of the Sons of God? Oh, for men who feel this idea burning into their bones! When shall we see them; and, without them, what will be phalanxes, groups and series, attractive industry and all the sublime words of modern reform? Oh that you would come as one of us, to work in the faith of a divine idea, to toil in loneliness and tears, for the sake of the kingdom which God may build up by our hands. All here, that is, all our old central members, feel more and more the spirit of devotedness, the thirst to do or die, for the cause we have at heart. We do not distrust Providence.

"We are willing to traverse the wilderness for forty years; we ask no grapes of Eschol for ourselves, we do not claim a fair abode in the promised land; but what can we do with raiment wearing old, and shoes bursting on our feet?"

After such a gush of warm, genuine, heroic enthusiasm, let us turn our step towards one who was engaged also in the enterprise, and with him close our account.

"If ever men might lawfully dream awake, and give utterance to their wildest visions without dread of laughter or scorn, on the part of the audience,—yes, and speak of earthly happiness for themselves and mankind as an object to be hopefully striven for, and probably attained,—we, who made that little semicircle around the fire, were those very men. We had left the rusty iron framework of society behind us, we had broken through many hindrances that are powerful enough to keep most people on the weary treadmill of the established system, even while they feel its irksomeness almost as intolerable as we did. We had stept down from the pulpit, we had flung aside the pen; we had shut up the ledger; we had thrown off that sweet, bewitching, enervating indolence, which is better, after all, than most of the enjoyments within mortal grasp. It was our purpose—a generous one, certainly, and absurd no doubt, in full proportion with its generosity,—to give whatever we had heretofore attained, for the sake of showing mankind a life governed by other than false and cruel principles, on which human society has all along been based.

"And, first of all, we had divorced ourselves from pride, and were striving to supply its place with familiar love. We meant to lessen the laboring man's great burthen of toil by performing our due share of it at the cost of our own thews and sinews. We sought our profit by mutual aid, instead of wresting it by the strong hand from our enemy, or filching it craftily, from those less shrewd than ourselves, if indeed there were any such in New England, or winning it by selfish competition with a neighbor; in one or another of which fashions, every son of woman both perpetrates and suffers his share of the common evil, whether he choose it or no. And, as the basis of our institution, we proposed to offer up the earnest toil of our bodies, as a prayer, no less than an effort, for the advancement of our race.

"Therefore if we built splendid castles (phalansteries they might be more fitly called), and pictured beautiful scenes, among the fervid coals of the hearth around which we were clustering, and if all went to rack with the crumbling embers, and have never since arisen out of the ashes, let us take to ourselves no

shame. In my own behalf, I rejoice that I could once think better of the world's improvability than it deserved. It is a mistake into which men seldom fall twice in a lifetime ; or, if so, the rarer and higher is the nature that can thus magnanimously persist in error.

"In the interval of my seclusion, there had been a number of recruits to our little army of saints and martyrs. They were mostly individuals who had gone through such an experience as to disgust them with ordinary pursuits, but who were not yet so old, nor had suffered so deeply, as to lose their faith in the better time to come. On comparing their minds one with another, they often discovered that this idea of a community had been growing up, in silent and unknown sympathy, for years. Thoughtful, strongly-lined faces were among them ; sombre brows, but eyes that did not require spectacles, unless prematurely dimmed by the student's lamplight, and hair that seldom showed a thread of silver. Age, wedded to the past, incrusted over with a stony layer of habits, and retaining nothing fluid in its possibilities, would have been absurdly

out of place in an enterprise like this. Youth, too, in its early dawn was hardly more adapted to our purpose ; for it would behold the morning radiance of its own spirit, beaming over the very same spots of withered grass and barren sand whence most of us had seen it vanish. We had very young people with us, it is true,— downy lads and rosy girls in their first teens, and children of all heights above one's knee ; but these had been chiefly sent hither for education, which it was one of the objects and methods of our institution to supply. Then we had boarders from town and elsewhere who lived with us in a familiar way, sympathized more or less in our theories, and sometimes shared in our labors.

"On the whole it was such a society as has seldom met together, nor perhaps could it be reasonably expected to hold together long. Persons of marked individuality — crooked sticks, as some of us might be called—are not exactly the easiest to bind up into a fagot. But, so long as our union should subsist, a man of intellect and feeling, with a free nature in him, might have sought far and near without find-

ing so many points of attraction as would allure him hitherward. We were of all creeds and opinions, and generally tolerant of all, on every imaginable subject. Our bond, it seems to me, was not affirmative, but negative. We had individually found one thing or another to quarrel with in our past life, and were pretty well agreed as to the inexpediency of lumbering along with the old system any further. As to what should be substituted, there was much less unanimity. We did not greatly care—at least I never did—for the written constitution under which our millennium had commenced. My hope was, that between theory and practice, a true and available mode of life might be struck out.

"While our enterprise lay all in theory, we had pleased ourselves with delectable visions of the spiritualization of labor. It was to be our form of prayer and ceremonial worship. Each stroke of the hoe was to uncover some aromatic root of wisdom, heretofore hidden from the sun. Pausing in the field to let the wind exhale the moisture from our foreheads, we were to look upwards and catch glimpses

into the far-off soul of truth. It is very true that, sometimes, casually gazing around me, out of the midst of my toil, I used to discern a richer picturesqueness in the visible scene of earth and sky. But this was all. The clods of earth, which we so constantly belabored and turned over and over, were never etherealized into thought. Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of evening. Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise. The yeoman and the scholar—the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity—are two distinct individuals, and can never be melted or welded into one substance.

"The bond of our community was such, that the members had the privilege of building cottages for their own residence within our precincts, thus laying a hearth-stone and fencing in a home, private and peculiar to all desirable extent, while yet the inhabitants should continue to share all the advantages of associative life.

"Often, however, in these years that are dark-

ening around me, I remember our scheme of noble and unselfish life ; and how fair in that first summer appeared the prospect that it might endure for generations, and be perfected, as the ages rolled away, into the system of a people and a world ! Were my former associates now there — were there only three or four of those true-hearted men still laboring in the sun,—I sometimes fancy that I should direct my world-weary footsteps thitherward, and entreat them to receive me, for old friendship's sake. More and more I feel that we had struck upon what ought to be a truth. Posterity may dig it up, and profit by it. The experiment, so far as its original projectors were concerned, proved, long ago, a failure ; first lapsing into Fourierism, and dying, as it well deserved, for this infidelity to its own higher spirit. Where once we toiled with our whole hopeful hearts, the town-paupers, aged, nerveless, and disconsolate, creep sluggishly a-field. Alas, what faith is required to bear up against such results of generous effort." *

* Hawthorne.

Alas, too, we repeat, that such should be the results of so many generous efforts and self-sacrifices,

> "Employed
> In forming models to improve the scheme
> Of man's existence, and recast the world." *

* Wordsworth.

VIII.

Fruitlands.

"When will the hundred summers die?
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the hearts of men?"

TENNYSON.

BEFORE we introduce the reader to the family at Fruitlands, we must inform him that, though the individuals composing it sympathized with the undertaking at Brook Farm, yet in many points they disagreed, and were dissimilar. The Fruitlanders took a more ascetic, spiritual, and religious view of life. To put the reader in current of their thought, we will make a few extracts from some of their writings.

"I am an organized being; I made not myself, I am unable to improve myself; there may be, there must be, an organizing power. This power I would discover, but I make not my own faculties, and I am not moved to seek it; faith I want, but I make not faith, and where am I to obtain it? How is it to come to me? I perceive; this very intuition of regenerative, or higher, purer life, is the basis of all the rest.

"This intuition we will cherish, as a loving, tender mother the first-born of her conception. It is a holy inspiration, coming down from heaven, to elevate the human propensities, from the animal degradation to the intellectual and moral regions. To none others than those who have the inborn idea, can the appeal for improvement be fairly or rationally addressed. But all are conscious of it, though not in an equal degree, and therefore all may be addressed. Where the inspiration is not, humanity is not.

"If men could be brought to the discernment of the loss they sustain by alienation from God, how readily would they submit to

every thing that is called privation, until they were again placed in that true relationship, that should bring them at one with their heavenly Parent, from whom alone they can ever receive love, or peace, or joy.

"In holding at a greater distance and at a lighter estimate the objects about and below him, there comes to man a higher and higher sense of his true destiny; and the clearer intuition of his high destiny enables man to hold in a lighter and easier manner, the objects about him and below him."

"Those who would inherit the glory of a new and heavenly life must first bear the cross to every lust and appetite, and evil propensity, even although this cross should require, as it did in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, the surrender of life itself."

"A well-fed man is never a central thinker."

"Here, then, we take our stand, and call upon all the friends of purity, virtue, and truth, to aid us to hold fast to the faithful practice of abstinence from all self-generating, lust-increasing habits of life. An undeviating celibacy for the kingdom of heaven's sake, is the first

indispensable step in a purely virtuous associative life. In this faith and practice we write and work for love's sake, in which we confide for all protection, inspiration, and enlovening, now and for ever."

"Sacred socialism acts to remove want, not to supply it. Want is a disease that must be removed. Self-denial must be insisted on.

"It is not from physical socialism that man will recover his religious vitality."

The reader will be now better able to understand and appreciate the attempt made by this class of men to realize their idea of life, at Fruitlands.

Fruitlands, as the place was called, because fruit was to be the principal staple of daily food, and to be cultivated on the farm, was situated in the county of Middlesex, three miles from the village of Harvard, and about forty from the city of Boston. The spot was well chosen, it was retired, breathing quiet and tranquillity. No neighboring dwelling obstructed the view of nature, and it lay some distance even from a bypath road, in a delightful solitude. The house, somewhat dilapidated, was

situated on the slope of a slowly ascending hill; stretched before it was a small valley undergoing cultivation with fields of corn, and wheat, and meadow. In the distance loomed up on high "Cheshire's haughty hill," Monadnoc. Such was the spot chosen by men inspired to live a holier life, to bring Eden once more upon this poor planet of ours.

Let them speak.

"I have no belief," said the Father of this family to one who postulated to enter their circle, "in associations of human beings for the purpose of making themselves happy by means of improved outward arrangements alone; as the foundations of happiness are within, and are spread to us as we are preharmonized or consociated with the Universal spirit. This is the one condition needful for happy association amongst men. And this condition is attained by the surrender of all individual or self-gratifications—a complete willingness to be moulded by the Divinity. This, as men now are, of course involves self-renunciation and retrenchment; and in enumerating the hindrances which debar us from happiness, we shall be drawn to

consider, in the first place, ourselves; and to entertain practically, the question, Are we prepared for the giving up of all, and taking refuge in Love as an unfailing Providence? A faith and reliance as large as this, seems needful to assure us against disappointment. The entrance to Paradise is still through the strait gate and narrow way of self-denial. Eden's avenue is still guarded by the fiery-sworded cherubim, and humility and charity are the credentials for admission.

"Our purposes, as far as we know them at present, are—to live independently of foreign aids, by being sufficiently elevated to procure all articles for subsistence in the production of the spot, under a regimen of healthful labor and recreation; with benignity towards all creatures human and inferior; with beauty and refinement in all economies; and the purest charity throughout our demeanor. We are not without hope that Providence will use us progressively, for beneficial effects, in the great work of human regeneration and the restoration of the highest life on earth."

These men were impressed with the religious-

ness of their enterprise. Listen to one who speaks of their way of doing. When the first load of hay was driven into the barn, one of the family, as the first fork was about to be plunged into it, took off his hat, and said: "I take off my hat, not that I reverence the barn more than any other place, but because this is the first fruit of our labor; I am conscious that what prompts my speech is felt by others as well as myself." And then a few moments were given to silence, that holy thoughts might be awakened on the occasion.

Fruitlands started into existence some years later than Brook Farm, yet before the latter enterprise was abandoned. At the time of the above incident Fruitlands numbered twelve members, eight of whom were adults.

In the summer of 1843, the following account was given of Fruitlands by one of its own members and published in the N. Y. Tribune, headed,

"THE CONSOCIATE FAMILY.

"To us it appears, not so much that improved circumstances are to ameliorate man-

kind, as that improved men will originate the superior conditions for themselves and others. Upon the human will, and not upon circumstances, as some philosophers assert, rest the function, power, and duty of generating a better social state. The human beings in whom the Eternal spirit has ascended from low, sensual delights, or mere human affections, to a state of spiritual chastity and intuition, are themselves a divine atmosphere, they *are* superior circumstances, and are constant in endeavoring to create, as well as to modify, all other conditions, so that these also shall more and more conduce to the like consciousness in others.

"Hence our perseverance in efforts to attain simplicity in diet, plain garments, pure bathing, unsullied dwellings, open conduct, gentle behavior, kindly sympathies, serene minds. These and several other particulars needful to the true end of man's residence upon earth, may be designated the Family life. The Family in its highest and divinest sense, is therefore our true position, our sacred earthly destiny. It comprehends every divine, every human relation consistent with universal good, and all others it rejects, as it disdains all animal sensualities.

"The evils of life are not so much social, or political, as personal, and a personal reform only can eradicate them.

"Family is not dependent upon number, nor riches, but upon union in and with the spirit which alone can bless any enterprise.

"Rather is self-denial the straight and narrow way to eternal life, than the enticements of increased indulgence which almost all associated endeavors have in view.

"As to property, we discover not its just disposal either in individual or social tenures, but in its entire absorption into New Spirit, which ever gives and never grasps.

"We do not recognize the purchase of land, but its redemption from the debasing state of *proprium*, or property, to divine uses.

"Our diet is strictly pure, and of bloodless kind. No animal substance, neither flesh, butter, cheese, eggs, nor milk, pollute our tables, or corrupt our bodies. Neither tea, coffee, molasses, nor rice, tempt us beyond the bounds of indigenous productions. Our sole beverage is pure fountain water.

"We rise at early dawn, commence the day

with cold bathing, succeeded by a music lesson, and then a chaste repast. Each one finds occupation till the meridian meal, when usually some interesting and deep-searching conversation gives rest to the body and development of mind. Occupation according to the season of the weather, engages out of doors or within, until evening meal, when we again assemble in social communion, prolonged generally till sunset, when we resort to sweet repose for the next day's activity.

"Abstain, being in preference to doing, is the great aim, and this comes to us rather by a resigned willingness than a wilful activity; which is indeed a check to all divine growth. Outward abstinence is a sign of inward fulness; and the only sound and true progress is inwards."

Winter, stern, cold, inhospitable winter approached. Fruitlands disappeared with the knot of its devoted and spiritually minded enthusiasts, and Eden once more re-entered the domain of the history of the past.

IX.

The Brotherhood of the Holy Cross.

"What other yearnings was the master tie
Of the monastic Brotherhood?—What but this
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:—
The life where hope and memory are as one;
Earth quiet and unchanged: the human soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness!
Such was their scheme;—thrice happy he who gained
The end proposed!"

WORDSWORTH.

SEVERAL attempts to realize a more perfect way of life have been made among different denominations of Protestants. Of these we select the community or "The Brother-

hood of the Holy Cross," which sprung up in the Anglican Church some eight or ten years ago. The sincerity with which this and other associations of the same nature were started, was most evident. The men who commenced them felt deeply and strongly the necessity of a more truthful life, both interiorly and exteriorly. They saw also the inefficiency of labor while confined to individual clergymen working alone; hence they desired to form themselves into a community which would aid them individually in a more perfect life, and at the same time, they would, by their combined efforts, be enabled to effect more good and be more successful in their efforts for others.

The brotherhood of the holy cross was at a place called "Valle Crucis." This name was given to a wild and beautiful spot in Ashe County, in the north-west corner of North Carolina; it was suggested by two streams crossing at the place. There was on the land, a house in which the members dwelt, called the "Mission House," a chapel, farm-houses, &c.,—crosses were placed on their tops, and a tall cross near the side of the road leading along the mountain

towards the mission lands. Such were the surroundings of the brotherhood at Valle Crucis.

A part of the brotherhood worked at regular hours on the farm, all the year round, and some spent a portion of the time during the week in teaching their school.

The hours for prayer were also fixed through the day, and the chapel was kept open, giving an opportunity to those who wished, to offer up their prayers and aspirations at the foot of the altar, at all times during the day.

There was preaching on Sundays in the chapel, for such as chose to come from the surrounding country. During the week, journeys on foot were made to the region around, twenty or thirty miles in circuit.

The clergymen cheerfully and earnestly labored to do the people in their neighborhood, who had been totally neglected in their instruction, some good; and their labors were not fruitless.

The superior of the brotherhood was an episcopal clergyman, who always resided at the "Mission House."

They aimed at a more perfect life, by means

of humble obedience, self-denial, and purity, hence they took the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. However, married persons were not excluded from their brotherhood ; they were only bound by the first vow, that of obedience.

Besides frequent prayer, meditations, communions, the practice of auricular confession was strictly held among them,—this indeed was a *sine qua non* for any person desiring to enter the brotherhood.

It seems that the community at Valle Crucis was only a branch of an order established by the Bishop of North Carolina, Dr. Ives, under the title of "The Brotherhood of the Cross."

The institution at Valle Crucis having encountered some opposition from the "Diocesan Convention," it was broken up, and the grounds disposed of. This brotherhood and one of a similar character at Nashota, Wisconsin, mark the same tendencies as those which actuated the movers at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, but in a more ecclesiastical aspect, and in one thing more they are alike—in their results,—they met with defeat instead of success, hopelessness instead of blessedness.

In sympathy and in truth we may say of these unsuccessful efforts with the poet :—

"O! wasted strength! O! light and calm
And better hopes so vainly given!
Like rain upon the herbless sea,
Poured down by too benignant heaven—
We see not stars unfixed by winds,
Or lost in aimless thunder-peals,
But man's large soul, the star supreme,
In guideless whirl how oft it reels?" *

* Sterling.

X.

Is there a Path.

"Is there no refuge but the tomb
For all this timeless spirit bloom?
Does earth no other prospect yield
But one broad, barren, battle-field?"

MILNES.

WERE all these high hopes but idle fancies and splendid insufficiencies? Were all these holy aspirations but illusions and deceptive dreams? Were these heroic sacrifices but evidences of minds deluded? Then is life a mockery, and true it is that,

"The fiend that man harries
Is love of the Best,"

* * * * *

Whose soul seeks the perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain." *

For, to give to man capacities and those the highest and noblest of his soul, to give to him wants the deepest and most sacred of his heart, to condemn him to seek for their realization, to hold over his head their proper objects like the apple of Tantalus, and destine him never to reach them; this is not the work of a loving Deity, but cruelty the most refined of a fiend. If such be life, it is a curse; and he tells the truth of man who says,

"Thy curse it was to see and hear
Beyond to-day's scant hemisphere,
Beyond all mists of doubt and fear,
Into a life more true and clear,
And dearly thou dost rue it." †

And it is not to be wondered at, that all our modern and youthful poets sing of Death, not as an "unknown form of a higher life," but invoke his shaft, as an escape from the mockery and wearisomeness of this—saying with Schiller,

* Emerson. † Lowell

> "Would this weary life were spent,
> Would this fruitless search were o'er!"

And if such be life and such its promises, who would not say from the depths of his soul in tones of earnestness,

> "And rather than such visions, bless
> The gloomiest depths of nothingness." *

But Mr. Emerson is wrong, not in saying that man loves the best and sees the perfect; no, to this every heart and head consents, but that he seeks in vain a realization of what he loves and sees. This is the error of Mr. Emerson and the whole school of this class of men. Our curse is not that we see into a life more clear and true, this is the loftiest attribute of man, but that man has lost or not yet discovered the way that leads to the possession of such a life. This is the fiend, here lies the curse, did these men but know it.

There is a way. Has it been lost? or has it not yet been found? That, indeed, would be a sad plight for humanity, and no less a libel upon

* Sterling.

God's goodness and wisdom, to imagine that man has wandered up and down upon this earth for these thousand years, and that none has found the path which leads to his true home and country.

On the contrary, God, in creating man a free agent, was bound to make known to him the law and path to his destiny; leaving man to choose, to obey, and to follow it if he pleased, or not; otherwise, man would have no room to exercise the noble faculty of will. He must know this too, in order to direct and employ his faculties and powers aright, to be what he should be; and until this is discovered, he is unable to act as a rational creature, as man.

There is, then, a path that leads us to our final aim; who is the one that has discovered it, and standing out as a guide, can say to humanity, "'Tis I; I am the way that leads to truth and life,—follow me!"

Does the past give us such an answer? What says the past?

XI.

The Model Man.

"About Him all the sanctities of Heaven
Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
Beatitude past utterance."

MILTON.

WHAT says the past concerning the soul and its wants, the meaning of life, the problem of man's destiny ?

Shall we interrogate the wise men of antiquity concerning the soul ? Democrates will tell us that it is fire ; Pythagoras says it is a motive number ; another, that it is an emanation of the stars ; another, that it is a harmony.

This one calls it blood, that one, spirit ;—and the divine Plato spends sleepless nights to prove

the immortality of the soul, and after all the efforts of his sublime genius, he dies, and dies without having been able to produce any proof, or persuade any one of his hearers of the truth of man's immortality.

Shall we ask these men the meaning of life? the destiny of man? But what can they tell us, who worshipped idols, demons, prostrated themselves and adored birds, quadrupeds, and vile reptiles? Even the wisdom of Socrates, and the genius and eloquence of Plato, were not sufficient to preserve them from idolatry and the grossest superstitions.

Heathenism gives us no model of a divine life; discovers to us no way to our true destiny. The heathen were just what many are now—seekers. The heathen have nothing to bestow upon us, unless it be the chart of their devious wanderings, and the history of their unsuccessful enterprises.

Heathenism shows but one truth plainly—that man must wait for the solution of his destiny till some one comes down from heaven to teach him. Such was the confession of Plato, the greatest and wisest of heathen philosophers.

Plato was right. If man is to find out the way to his final end, it can only be by some one descending from heaven to teach him the way. But Plato did not say all. This some one who is to descend from heaven to teach man the way to his beatitude must be God himself!

God, as we have already shown, is the end of man. God's destiny is man's destiny. God's beatitude is man's beatitude. God's life is man's life. God, therefore, is the true ideal of man. But God is a pure spirit, and man is not; man is a spirit and body united in one person. God, therefore, does not represent man in all his relations. God, therefore, is not a perfect model to man.

Man needs, as a perfect pattern of life, one who unites in his nature both God and man, one whom he can see with his eyes, hear with his ears, touch with his hands. One to whom the human heart can easily attach itself in a way fitting its nature, and can love with familiarity. One who is visible to the mind and accessible to the senses, and in whom both soul and body can find their hopes, their proper objects, and their

beatitude. In one word, man needs as his model a God-Man.

This is no new idea, there is no nation in which the birth of a God-man was not expected. The ancient patriarchs sighed for his coming; the prophets announced his reign; the sybils chanted his victories; and the poets sung his praises.

The universal convictions of the conscience of humanity are the voices of the Divinity. The expectations of men were not doomed to disappointment. In the fulness of time there came from heaven an angel, and announced the following message to a spotless maiden in a humble cottage. "Hail, full of grace;" "blessed art thou amongst women;" "the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son, and his name shall be called 'Jesus the Son of God.'" *

This wonderful child was born in a stable. The moment he was born, angels spoke to men, and said: "This day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord," † and from the clouds

* Luke i. † Luke ii.

angels were heard chanting the hymn,—"Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will." * A new star at that time appeared in the heavens, and the God-child was adored by shepherds and kings.

According to the custom of the Jewish people the babe was brought to the temple, and an old priest receiving it in his arms, in rapture exclaims: "Now dismiss thy servant, O Lord, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." *

At the age of twelve years he reappears in the Temple of Jerusalem, "astonishing the Doctors by the wisdom of his questions and answers." *

Twenty more years elapse; the child becomes a man: while the waters of Jordan are poured upon his head, a spirit in the form of a dove descends upon him; the heavens are opened and a voice is heard saying; "This is my beloved Son." †

The Baptist, a man of austere and holy life,

* Luke ii. † Matt. iii.

pointing to him, says: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world!" * And with the voice and tone of authority he says, "I saw, and gave testimony that this is the Son of God." *

John, his beloved disciple, gives the same testimony. "The word," he says, "was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory as it were of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." *

Peter, enlightened from on high, makes the same confession and says: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." †

The doubts of Thomas, on beholding him, are all dispelled, and he exclaims unhesitatingly: "My Lord, and my God!" ‡

Paul tells us that in him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead corporally; that he was the brightness of God's glory, and the figure of his substance.

This man has the unheard-of boldness to stand up before the whole world and say of himself, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I

* John i. † Matt. xvi. ‡ John xx.

go to the Father;" "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine." *

Increasing in boldness, he fears not to tell us that: "He that seeth me seeth the Father also," † and adds, "I and the Father are one." ‡

Finally, and to leave no room for doubt, when the high-priest put the question directly to him, "Art thou Christ the Son of the blessed God?" § he falters not, but unhesitatingly and emphatically replies, "I am." §

To confirm his assertions he works wonders; he multiplies bread, cures the sick, raises the dead, calms tempests, walks upon water, and crowns all by saying to his disciples, "He that believeth in me, the works that I do he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do." ‖

He is condemned and executed because of his daring to proclaim himself God. At the moment when he expires all nature is in mourning. The sun becomes dark, the earth trembles, the rocks are split, graves deliver up their dead, and the veil of the temple is rent. Unable longer to resist the universal testimony and the

* John xvi. † John xiv. ‡ John x.
§ Mark xiv. ‖ John xiv.

voice of nature, the Roman officer present at his execution cries out to the world, "Indeed this was the Son of God." *

He is dead and is placed in a tomb, a rock is rolled before its entrance, it is sealed, and a guard of Roman soldiers keep watch. All now is still, his disciples are cast down and discouraged, his work is ended. Not so! It is but now to commence.

The third day he rises from the grave with a body all resplendent with glory; he enters the room where his disheartened disciples are assembled, while the doors are closed; he encourages them, eats and drinks with them, commands them to preach the Gospel to all creatures, promises them the Holy Ghost, and in the presence of hundreds, he ascends into heaven and disappears in the clouds.

On the day appointed, the Holy Ghost descends with a noise like a rushing wind and in the shape of fiery tongues upon the apostles. They who had been so timid to truth, now publish his gospel, in spite of menace and opposition, to all the world. They speak in different

* Matt. xxvii.

tongues, work miracles, and men of all nations believe in the name of Jesus and are baptized.

These timid and illiterate men, now bold as lions, and confounding the most learned scribes, preach the gospel, and, in a short time, spread it among the Greeks and Romans. They seal their testimony to the divinity of their Master with their blood.

Three centuries of persecution pass away. Millions of men, women, and even children shed their blood like water, as witnesses of their faith in the Godhead of this man of Nazareth, and as a mark of their love for him. The religion of the Nazarene becomes the religion of the Empire.

Conflicts, progress and triumph, from the day when it was said "Hail Virgin" to the present, attest the divinity of the founder of Christianity, and thus is fulfilled the prophecy, in which he is foretold to be "*Pater futuri sæculi*," "The Father of the world to come."

"In Him thy God, O Plato, dwelt on earth,
An open Presence, clear of earthly ill;
The Life which drew from him its heavenly birth,
In all who seek renews his perfect Will."

"But 'mid thy countless forms of being,
One shines supreme o'er all beside,
And man, in all thy wisdom seeing,
In Him reveres a sinless guide.

"In Him alone, no longer shrouded
By mist that dims all meaner things,
Thou dwell'st, O God! unveil'd, unclouded,
And fearless peace thy presence brings." *

* Sterling.

XII.

The Model Life.

"The word fulfilled was He, for ever shown
To man the living Archetype of life,
In whose embodied light our spirits own
A certain hope—a rest secure from strife."

STERLING.

BUT man not only needs a God-man to be to him a model of a perfect man, he also needs that this God-man should be to him a pattern in every relation of life. He must feel all the burdens of life, experience all its pains, suffer all its miseries, drink of all its woes, meet all its difficulties, and overcome them all in his own person. He must be

"One
Who sees all sufferings, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs." *

He must be all this, or he cannot serve as a model to all men. No one individual of the race, whatever may be his state or condition, can serve as a true example to all men in gaining their final aim, if they can turn from him and say, "I am in doubt and in perplexity how to act."

What does Jesus say in regard to man's relations with God? He tells us that in all things he did not his own will but the will of Him who sent him. That it was his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. And what he taught was by him practised, and practised before he taught. "Jesus began to do and to teach."

In regard to man's duty to himself, he declares that the gaining of the whole world is nothing compared to the loss of one's own soul. That we should seek first the kingdom of heaven, and that all other needful things will be added unto us. He places before men the highest ideal

* Wordsworth.

of life, and demands, on their part, heroic truthfulness. In his sight an aimless word is not without sin. And in walking the path of his own destiny he falters not, though he sees before him from the beginning of his career the death of the cross. "I am in labors from my youth." * "And my sorrow is continually before me." †

As to man's duty to his fellow-men he also presents to us a sublime model for imitation. Herein he shows the stamp of his divinity most clearly. He lived not for his own country alone, but for the whole world,—not for his own people alone, but for entire humanity ; not for his followers alone, but for his enemies, his calumniators, and even his executioners. His object was to restore man to his original dignity, to aid him in securing true happiness, in a word, to obtain the salvation of all mankind.

So warm are his affections for men that all who love and keep the truth he calls his mother, his brethren, his sisters, his friends, and he identifies his interests and happiness with theirs so intimately, that he is ready to lay down his life for them.

* Ps. lxxxvii. † Ps. xxxvii.

In all the relations of life, "though tempted in all things like as we are," * he is found free from fault. Such is the purity of his conscience, the uprightness of his intentions, and the truthfulness of his life, that he ventures to do what man never did before or since his time, and never will do again. He stands before his enemies and challenges them to accuse him of deviating from truth in any of his actions. "Which of you shall accuse me of sin?" †

In nothing does he seek his own honor, and the praises of man have no attraction for his mind. He is a true speaker; he calls the proud, proud; the hypocrites, hypocrites; and whitened sepulchres, whitened sepulchres; this his enemies acknowledge: "Master," they say, "we know that thou art a true speaker and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou dost not regard the persons of men." ‡

He is the Saint of saints, yet he walks with sinners, converses with blasphemers, talks with the adulterer and the miser, gives the kiss of peace to Judas the traitor, offers pardon to the

* Heb. iv. † John viii. ‡ Matt. xxii.

thief, and speaks to the sinner with such tenderness that his eyes are filled with tears. One who feels such pity for the afflicted, such sympathy for the sufferer, and such compassion for the wretched, must himself have "walked woe's depths" and sorrow. This is what his apostle tells us when he speaks of "Jesus the Son of God who penetrated the heavens;" he adds: "For we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin." *

He is foretold as the man of sorrows, knowing our infirmities. Such he is. A whole people curse him, one of his disciples sells him, another denies him, the rest abandon him in the moment of trial. He has not a morsel of bread with which to appease his hunger, nor a drop of water to moisten his parched lips, nor a stone whereon to lay his head. In one word, the poor and the rich, the humble and the powerful, the happy and the unhappy, all are in him, for he alone is at the same time very rich and very poor, very powerful and very humble, having in

* Heb. iv.

himself the fulness of bliss, while yet at the same time he is covered with want, destitution, and wretchedness ; thus serving as a model for all classes and conditions of men. "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases." *

His sufferings are beyond all measure. The agony in the garden of Gethsemane causes drops of blood to flow from every pore of his body ; his face is livid, he is all one wound by the stripes he has received, his head is crowned with thorns, and as he bears his heavy cross upon his lacerated shoulders, a crowd follow filling the air with cries of derision and contempt. Stripped of his garments he is nailed to the cross by his hands and feet ; there is not a limb or member of his body in which he does not suffer unheard-of cruelties.

Raised upon the cross, his heavenly Father turns away his countenance, and the angels that serve him, filled with dismay and fear, cover their faces with their wings. At the moment of death his divinity abandons, as it were, his humanity ; still he remains calm and peaceful, and prays not for himself but for his executioners.

* Matt. viii.

The last words he utters are, "It is consummated." * What he could not gain by his wisdom and power, he gained by his sufferings and death—the hearts of men.

His work was accomplished—the conquering of humanity by love; and at his last act, the crowning act of his career, he fulfilled his saying, "When I shall be raised up I will draw all men unto me." That is, men beholding this last and divine proof of my undying love for them, will be able to resist my love no longer. Thus did the man of Nazareth stand out before the whole world as the God-man;—man's perfect model, and his life the model of man's life perfected, inviting all men to follow him—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

"Like us, a man, He trode on earthly soil,
He bore each pang, and strove in weary toil;
He spake with human words, with pity sigh'd;
Like us He mourn'd, and fear'd, and wept, and died."

"A Heart that beat for every human wo,
A Choice in holiest purpose pure and strong,
A Truth, sole morning-Light of all below,
A Love triumphant over deadliest wrong." †

* John xix. † Sterling.

XIII.

Idea of the Church.

"For haply thus the Lord of earth and skies,
From his own Heaven of Heaven descending
To look on us with human eyes,
Clothed with our sympathies and with us blending,
Would teach us that His Church on earth,
Shadow of Him who gave her birth,
E'en like her Lord when seen below,
Should put on human charities;
Visit each shape of human woe;
And like her Master should be known
Making our human feelings all her own,
Visiting each in lowly dress
Of more than human tenderness."

BAPTISTEY.

IT is remarkable that no one before or since Jesus Christ ventured to proclaim himself as the guide to truth and life. Jesus Christ did

more than this; he proclaimed himself to be "*the* way, *the* truth, and *the* life."

But Jesus Christ, to be the way, the truth, and the life to all generations of men, as he was to the generation in which he lived, must be present to them, not in a dead book, or in an indefinite and abstract manner, but as their Teacher, Guide, Helper, Father, Friend, Brother, Lover. He must meet all the wants of man's heart, and satisfy all the demands of man's intellect; and that really and personally, for all men have need of vital and personal relations with their Saviour.

We, for our part, refuse to acknowledge for our Saviour, one dead and separated from us by eighteen centuries; nor can we admit that a book, written in a dead language by his disciples, containing, at best, but a small part of what he said and did, is the fountain-source of God's eternal and everlasting Truth.

To send man back eighteen centuries, or tell him to read a book, however good, when he feels the pressing need of the love of the infinite God in his heart, is downright mockery. If Christ is to be to us a Saviour, we must find him here,

now, and where we are, in this age of ours also; otherwise he is no Christ, no Saviour, no Immanuel, no "God *with us.*" If Christ does not do this, then he is no more than a man,—a man, if you please, like Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato; no more,—nay, not even so much, for Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato acted, died, like men, and claimed to be only men. But Jesus Christ proclaimed himself equal to God,—yea, God himself; and taught his disciples to believe it. Hence, if he was not God, he was less than these heathen philosophers; for, say of them what you please, they did not practise imposition on their disciples.

We are nothing loth to give to Christ all the titles he claims, or that his followers ask for him; on the contrary, if we could conceive of higher titles than are claimed for him, we would readily concede them. But what we want and desire from our inmost soul is, that he should make these titles good. For man needs a Saviour, and needs as a Saviour one who is all that Christ claims to be.

We have seen that Christ was "The Model Man," and presented to the world "The Model

Life;" the question now is: Did Christ provide a substitute or representative of himself, which should answer to all the wants of man for all generations, as he answered to the generation in which he lived?

First of all, let us ask, What are the wants of man that must be answered?

The first and deepest want of man's heart is guidance. But it must be an unerring and divine guidance. Nothing less than this can give repose to man's feelings, and the sense of security to his intelligence. Such a guidance alone can give to man happiness, and ennoble his being while he obeys.

For to obey, to be submissive, is an essential part of man's nature. Man cannot be happy without obedience; and all he needs to render him perfectly happy is to know, without fear of deception, that the authority which he obeys is not a human, but a divine authority; an authority that can, and does, speak to him in the name, and with the authority and voice of Almighty God. That religion, therefore, which does not recognize obedience, but throws man back upon his own authority, condemns itself as

inadequate to meet the wants of man's heart; and proclaims its own want of faith in its own divine mission. And a religion that does not lead man to obey, shows sufficiently that it is not of divine origin, for no sooner does man hear the voice of God speaking to him, than his heart responds "obey!" And yield he must, though "his strength were that of stone, and his flesh of brass."

Moreover, the soul needs an authority to teach and show to it its final aim, and the means of attaining it. And religion must teach this with an unerring and divine authority, for man cannot afford to err when his eternal interests are at stake.

If the Christian religion has no such authority, then we cast aside its creeds, its dogmas, and its formulas. They are but worthless fictions of men's brains. Away with them, and a curse be upon the Church or man that would shackle the soul with them! For he is no Christian or freeman, but a bigot and a slave, who obeys aught else than a divine authority, in all that concerns the intercourse of his soul with its Creator.

A Church of Christ, if there be one, must be to us a mother, upon whose loving bosom we can lay our wearied heads, and from her breasts of divine truth and love draw, like babes, sweet nourishment for our thirsting souls, not dreaming that what we draw from her will ever turn into poison.

Not only is it the office of the true religion of Christ's Church to point out to man, with unerring certitude, his future, but it is hers, also, to help and afford to man all the means by which to gain it. In one word, the essential idea of the Church—of its work, is this: to present to man, clearly and distinctly, in her dogmas, his true destiny, and the paths which lead to it; and furnish him in her sacraments with the life and strength he needs to realize it. In short, the destiny of man, and the shortest and most speedy way of realizing it, is the problem the Church must have in view in all her dogmas, sacraments, rites, ceremonies, and other functions. The Church, therefore, must be a guide, a helper to man, in all and every phase and vicissitude of his life, from the moment he draws his first breath till he has secured his final aim.

First of all, the Church must attract the child. Children must be at home in her sanctuary, and there find a blessing, as if in the arms of Jesus. Children must take part in her divine worship, and look up to her priests with a filial affection. A Church that does not attract the little child, as well as the sage, the poet and the genius, is no divine Church, for, said Christ, "the kingdom of heaven is for such." *

What is more, the Church, to be a guide to heaven, must call forth in men's hearts by her teachings, childlike virtues; such as purity, sweetness, cheerfulness, docility and obedience; —thus filling life with the charm and hopes of youth. For the condition of our entering heaven is, according to Christ, to become as little children: "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." † The Church, therefore, that truly represents Christ, must not only attract children, but call forth childlike virtues in the heart of man, and perpetuate them through life. Youth, also, must find in the Church a friend and guide.

Man is not born with self-consciousness. The

* Matt. xix. † Matt. xviii.

moment he becomes self-conscious, he thinks of God. The moment man thinks of God, a new life springs up in his heart; he would live for God. No sooner has the heart of man given birth to this new desire than he feels the need of a friend; he feels the need of something more,—that this friend should also be to him a guide. But he feels that this new life in his heart is sacred, consequently he feels that this friend and guide should have also a sacred character. In short, he feels the need of one who should represent at the same time in his person a friend, a guide, a spiritual father.

He who knows aught of the heart of youth, knows that no want is felt so deeply as that of such a friend and guide in the spring of life.

> "Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
> When thought is speech, and speech is truth."*

One to whom the young and generous heart can unbosom itself freely, and make itself known as before God. One who can guide by a superior light and wisdom, sympathize and aid by good

* Scott.

counsel, and encourage the timid and inexperienced youth to follow the noble aspirations of the heart and the divine inspirations of heaven. One, too, who at the same time can help to eradicate the roots of vice "that send forth branches in the obscurity of the heart."

Say not that the consciousness of the need of such guidance is a mark of weakness. On the contrary, it is an evidence of the highest kind of courage, and a mark of true greatness. For it springs from a sincere and heroic resolve of the soul to free itself of all self-love, delusion, and sham. He who has not felt this need, knows not what is the incipient step of a true and noble life. He who has not made this resolve, has received his soul in vain.

To recommend prayer and reading the Bible to one who feels the need of a personal guide, is to proclaim our insufficiency and incapacity. To tell him to open his heart, and to communicate its life to one like himself, is to desecrate his heart, and to profane the sanctuary of the soul.

If there be a Church of Christ, she must afford in her priesthood such guides to souls.

Jesus was such a guide. The priests of Christ's Church must represent Christ. *Sacerdos est alter Christus.* If not, the church fails to meet the primary want of man's heart. We insist upon this ; for if Christianity be the religion of the Author of man, it must be adequate to meet all the spiritual wants of man's nature.

Human nature needs more, and more it must have, to secure its happiness here, and final happiness hereafter.

Man is weak, frail, sinful. He has not only a light, smiling, sunny side to his nature, but also a dark, cloudy, night side. Not seldom man deviates from the straight and narrow road which leads to his final aim ; and often he wanders into paths that lead him quite astray. Conscience—that light to guide man aright—is dimmed and obscured ; the heart is a prey to feelings of remorse, and the soul filled with misery and despair. There is no man who can look up to heaven, and say, in the face of God, that he has not sinned.

"So wonderful
Is human nature, and its varied ties
Are so involved and complicated, that none

May hope to keep his inmost spirit pure,
And walk without perplexity in life." *

The first want of man's heart, then, is to unbosom itself; for such is its nature, that it can no more conceal sin than joy. Sin, like murder, will out. There is no darkness, there is no shadow of death, where sin and shame remain hidden.

"Foul deeds will rise
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes." †

God himself has decreed, that whatsoever is hidden, shall come to light.

Now the office of religion, of the Church of Christ, must be to afford to man the means of freeing his soul,

"When fear, remorse, and shame the bosom wring,
And guilt his secret burthen cannot bear,
And conscience seeks in speech a respite from despair," ‡

and of restoring him once more to grace and friendship with God.

Christ did this for Magdalen, for the leper,

* Goethe. † Shakspeare. ‡ Scott.

for the penitent thief. He was not ignorant of man's wants and miseries. Did he fail to communicate to his Church the power which he possessed? If so, he forfeits the title of being the Saviour and Redeemer of men.

But we are not disposed to believe that Christ came down from heaven upon earth among men for a few years, and then withdrew with all his powers and gifts to an eternal repose, leaving man alone in all his misery and wretchedness. No,

> "He came below, of man the friend,
> To walk with man till time shall end." *

He came to save all men to the end of time, and when he left the earth, he did not withdraw the powers he exercised and the gifts he brought, but communicated them to men, his chosen representatives, to be employed by them, as they had been by him, until the consummation of the world. The Church of Christ, therefore, must possess all powers and gifts, and among others, that of pardoning the sinner and reconciling him to God.

* The Cathedral.

The heart's deep cry of love, the insatiable thirst of the soul for life, cannot be stilled till it drinks from the very fountain-source of light and love.—The supreme want of man's heart is God ; God, not in an ideal or abstract manner, but God in such a manner as adequately to meet man, constituted as he is. Man has a heart, a sensitive heart, a heart of flesh and blood. This heart, to be met, requires that God should come to it sensibly, come to it in flesh and blood.

It is not sufficient that God, impelled by his own nature, created man ; that he created man in his own image and likeness ;—it is not sufficient that God became man to make man God ; —love is not satisfied even with all this display of love. Love is not satisfied till she gives herself entirely to the object loved. This is the very nature of love. In demanding, therefore, of God to give himself to us, not as pure spirit, for constituted as we are, we cannot receive God as pure spirit, but to clothe himself in a visible form, become like one of us, and so be ours in a full and adequate manner, we only demand what his own nature, which is love, impels him to do, we only demand what our own heart's love asks,

of which he is the author, we only demand what he himself has offered; "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." *

This bread of life, the Church of Christ must supply to the soul, thirsting for life, and the heart, burning for love.

If it be the office of the Church to accompany and aid man in all the vicissitudes of life, much more is it her task to be with him, and assist him in the last and most tragic act of life,

"When sin doth at thy bosom knock,
And he whom thou hast made thy liege,
Doth call in death thy woes to mock,
And as he presses on the siege,
Within thy breast th' undying worm
Begins to show his serpent form." †

At that hour, which is emphatically the hour when man needs a divine power to aid and support him, the Church in her priests must be by his side. It is hers to assist the soul in its struggles with death. The battle of death being over,

* John vi. † Baptistry.

the Church must not loose her hold upon the soul; but with a divine boldness of faith she must stretch forth her maternal arms to aid and protect it beyond the grave, and not leave it till she sees it safe and secured in the embraces of God, and reposing upon his paternal bosom in smiles of heavenly joy.

A Church that cannot and does not do this, is not a divine Church, is not God's Church; it is a libel upon God to call it a church at all.

Such must be the answers of the Church of Christ to the wants of the soul. She must be a sure, efficacious, and easy guide of every man to his divine destiny, whether he be king or slave, rich or poor, artist or laborer, in a word to every individual of the race, whether white or black, young or old, man or woman. For God created all men for beatitude, eternal beatitude; therefore he must have provided his Church with universal, adequate, and abundant means for every man to attain it.

But the Church of Christ must not only answer in general to the wants of the soul, she must also provide in a special manner for those privileged souls that her Divine Founder has

called to represent his life and virtues in an eminent degree; who, unlike the young man spoken of in the Gospel, are bold with divine affection, and ready to follow the invitation of the Divine Master in humble obedience, angelic purity, and willing poverty; in a word, to copy his virtues and life of self-denial.

She must provide for such the means to lead this life; to realize the visions of truth, of love, of beauty, which feed their souls with a divine enthusiasm and a heroic courage.

Such souls as these need solitude, silence, protection from the world, freedom from its excessive toils and depressing cares; a roof to shelter them, experienced guides, and a wise discipline to direct them aright in their sublime vocation.

Thousands of hearts seek such a home, such a retreat and school of virtue, where they can devote themselves entirely to the development and growth of the divine life, enkindled in their bosoms. We have seen this in the unsuccessful attempt of the founders of Brook Farm, Fruitlands, Valle Crucis, &c., who were but a small number of a large class among us who

are seeking the way to live an earnest and true life.

We demand that the Church of Christ should not only offer them the means and give to them the helps to follow the footsteps of the Divine Man, but that she should give the sanction of all her authority to their life, defend them with all her power, cherish them with all her affection, encourage them in their heroic career with all her favors, in one word be to them Christ, the Guide, the Friend, the Helper, the Lover. She must stretch out her maternal arms and say to them : "Come to me, children of my heart's life. Here in my bosom is all you seek. Your inspiration, your noble aims and hopes are the whisperings of my Divine Spouse to your souls. Come, here is a mother's heart, a mother's love, a mother's care, a mother's blessing, and a mother's choicest gifts." Such must be the language of Christ's Church to this class of privileged souls.

If Christ has failed to establish a Church which is adequate to meet all these wants of the soul, then Christ has failed as the Saviour of mankind, and we look forward to the redemp-

tion of man, to "The new Teacher," "The Church of the Future," or by all that in us lies, we will,

"Out of our own
Bosom this lost world restore." *

* Goethe.

XIV.

Protestantism and the Church.

"But who shall now discern the Heavenly Bride?
And who shall now Truth's royal signet tell?
O Truth, thyself within my soul abide,
Lead me through tangled ways, and be thyself my guide!"

BAPTISTRY.

WE have unriddled man's destiny; or rather the God-man, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead corporally," has given to us its complete solution; we have gazed upon his divine lineaments, and beheld in him the problem of life revealed and realized; we have in a few pages sketched the outlines of the Church of God; what we now have to do is, to seek and discover where and which is this

Church, or if we are still to look for it in the future.

What first claims our serious attention is the faith of the Church in which we were born and nurtured—the Protestant. Is the Protestant Church a true, kind and loving mother, from whose breasts her children can draw copious streams of truth and love? or, is she a step-mother, heartless, cold, and are her breasts of stone? What is Protestantism?

Protestantism courts free inquiry, and hails the disenthralled intellect of man with shouts of joy; and we on our side will meet it with earnest hearts, with minds bent upon pursuing the truth at all costs, and with brave resolves to embrace it, and be true to its behests lead where they may. What says Protestantism to the deep wants of man's heart?

Our standard must be the truth. But what truth? The Protestant exclaims, the Gospels. We accept them; and he who meets with defeat must not forget who had the choice of weapons. Let us begin.

How does Protestantism meet the want of a divine and unerring authority in matters of re-

ligion ? in the question of man's destiny and true guidance ?

Is not the simple raising of the question of an unerring authority a patent condemnation of Protestantism ?

Does not the fundamental principle of Protestantism, the supremacy of private judgment, exclude all idea of an unerring authority in religion ?

We say the supremacy of private judgment, for although Protestants point us to the Bible, when asked for their authority in matters of religion, still it is always the Bible as interpreted by private judgment.

The supremacy of private judgment was, and still continues to be, the generative and distinctive principle of Protestantism ; to deny it would be to condemn the reformation from its incipient step. It was on this principle that the great reformer, Luther, took his stand at Worms, when he appealed to God and his own conscience in justification of his opinions and conduct.

Protestantism points with pride to the attitude of Dr. Martin Luther, and makes it her glory and boast to have disenthralled man from

all authority in religion, except his own private judgment.

We do not wish to rob it of its glory. It is properly the glory of Protestantism. But it is on this ground we take it up, find fault with it, and condemn it.

We condemn Protestantism, as insufficient to meet the wants of man's heart, as unable to satisfy the demands of man's intelligence, and as faithless in representing the authority of Christ.

The heart condemns it, because the supreme want of the heart is peace. But this can only be gained by an unerring and divine authority upon which the heart can repose with feelings of perfect security. Protestantism denies all such authority, the heart therefore condemns it.

Reason condemns it, because religion is not a system of opinions resting upon man's private judgment, but a body of revealed truths, adapted and necessary to the full development and perfection of man's intelligence and heart, and depending upon an unerring and divine authority. Luther's appeal, therefore, to his own private judgment at Worms, was a great

mistake ; he played the part of the angel of darkness in the garb of light, fit only

> "To fool a crowd with glorious lies,
> To cleave a creed in sects and cries." *

Christ condemns the central principle of the Protestant system of religion. He did not leave man to grope his way to heaven through all the meshes of error. He said to his Church, "Go teach all nations ; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." † "He that heareth you heareth me." ‡ Hence,

> "Its most illustrious province must be found
> In furnishing guidance, a support
> Not treacherous." §

Christ, therefore, condemns Protestantism, because it fails to represent him, in its authority, as the unerring and divine Teacher and Saviour of mankind.

What has Protestantism for little children ? for innocent childhood ?

* Tennyson. † Matt. xxviii. ‡ Luke x. § Wordsworth.

Four bare, whitewashed walls—a lecture room. As a modern Protestant writer has well said—"The Church is now rather a lecture room than a place of worship." Protestantism has mutilated or destroyed in religion all that wins or attracts childhood, and substituted in its place, cold, lifeless, dry, intellectual abstractions. How unlike Him

"Whose arms eternal, were young children's home."

And how can that faith implant childlike virtues of docility, gentleness, love, sweetness, simplicity, and humility, in the heart of man, when it fosters in his mind the notion that his own judgment is supreme?

Humility is the first, the mother of all other Christian virtues. Humility leads man to prefer the judgment of others to his own. Protestantism, on the contrary, tends to make each one prefer his own judgment to that of all others. The beau-ideal of Protestantism, logically developed, is egoism, and the idolatry of self. For its pretended obedience to God, or the Holy Ghost, or its faith in Holy Scripture, is an act which always involves the supremacy of

private judgment ; consequently, its virtues are but other forms of pride and self. This fact condemns Protestantism to an eternal sterility, and explains why it has no martyrs, no saints, no Christian heroes, nor even any writers of note, who have composed books on Christian virtues or of devotion.

Protestantism having once for all denied all infallible authority, it is impossible for it ever to escape this *vicious* circle.

We again condemn Protestantism because it fails to meet the wants of childhood, and is incompetent to produce those virtues in the heart which fit man for heaven, and give to man, even in this life, a foretaste of the charms of paradise.

What says Protestantism to the need of a friend, a guide, a spiritual director ? Many hearts are aching with such a want ; "true guidance," says Mr. Carlyle, "for loveful obedience, is the prime want of man's heart." Human friendship cannot meet this want, for it is the deep cry of man's religious nature.

We cannot but experience the want of a guide and director the moment we would undertake to live a life that is above us, to which we

are as strangers and babes. How many doubts, how many dangers, how many temptations, how many misgivings are not encountered in the beginning of spiritual life! How many souls have made shipwreck, or have been lost in the mazes of a false spiritualism; or ended in the most incurable of all vices,—spiritual pride,—for want of a wise and experienced spiritual guide!

Now how does Protestantism answer this want? She answers like a step-mother—"Be your own guide." Or if she tells you to "read the Bible," "look to God," or "to pray," if private judgment be supreme, what else is this but the same answer, only in other words?

How different was the language of Christ to those who inquired of him what they had to do? When Saul was suddenly struck to the ground and recognized Jesus as the Saviour, the first question he asked of him was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city and there it shall be told thee what thou must do."* And it was there, by the mouth of Ananias,

* Acts ix.

that Christ told Paul what he should do. And God dealt in the same manner with Cornelius, a centurion. "This man saw in a vision manifestly an angel of God coming in unto him and saying to him; Cornelius. And he beholding him, being seized with fear said, What is it, Lord? And he said to him: Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God. And now send men to Joppa, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter. He will tell thee what thou must do." * Here we see that though Christ spoke to Paul directly, and to Cornelius by the ministration of an angel, yet when it was a question of personal guidance, he sent them both to those who were in authority in his church, and of whom he said, "He that heareth you heareth me;" showing conclusively, that he intended we should look for true guidance to the priests of his church, and practically enforcing his doctrine by resigning his own right to direct souls, and sending them to his chosen ministers.

Protestantism, in throwing man back on his own private judgment for true guidance, fails to

* Acts x.

answer the want of man's religious nature, deprives the soul of the consolation of the practice of religious obedience, and does not represent to us the office of Christ, as teacher and guide of men.

Yes, the youth of our land rise up and ask in all earnestness for true guidance to the fulfilment and realization of the divine inspirations of their hearts, and the Protestant Church stands and listens to their earnest appeals, stony, heartless, and unconcerned as a sphinx. Thus:

> "Harden'd and hardening all the heart
> Of those with her that take their part.
> Heartless herself, and rendering such
> All iron-hearted by her touch;
> Heartless herself, her rude control
> Eats out the very feeling soul."*

* Baptistry.

XV.

Continuation.

"Let me be pure!
Oh! I wish I was a pure child again."
BAILEY.

WHO can describe the pains of remorse in a guilty conscience?

"Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign
Can match the fierce, unutterable pain
He feels, who night and day devoid of rest,
Carries his own accuser in his breast." *

The stings of remorse are the most sensible anticipations that man can experience in this life

* Gifford.

of the pains of hell. Who can picture to us the consolation and joys of the soul at the pardon of sin? Of all consolations, of all joys, the greatest is, when a sinner, who has incurred the displeasure of God, is assured by divine authority, that God has pardoned his sins, washed his soul clean from the guilt of his crimes, restored him to his friendship, and looks upon him once more as his child. This is a sensible foretaste of the happiness of heaven.

What says Protestantism to this want of the sinner's heart?

Let one of her poets speak :—

"I know my soul is weighed
With many sins—the pages of my life
Soiled with unworthy records; that I go
Redder than scarlet to the awful bar
Where God shall judge me; but even knowing this,
And stung with wild, unutterable woe
As the lost chances of my life arise,
With all their opportunities of good
Deepening the blackness of the evil choice,
I will not lean upon another's arm,
Or lift my soul upon another's prayer,
Or bid a human intercessor plead
My perilous cause; but I will stagger on,
Beneath my sins, unto the feet of God.

Go, Priest! the absolution which I seek
No prayer of yours can purchase." *

Such is the answer of Protestantism. Protestantism says, man has not the power to pardon sin. Protestantism is right, if it speaks of man as pardoning sin on his own authority.

That Jesus Christ had the power to pardon sin, no one can deny, except an infidel. He forgave the man sick with the palsy his sins; and when the Jews murmured at this, he confirmed his authority by working a miracle.

He forgave Magdalen her sins, as also the penitent thief. Now, no one who believes in Christ, will deny, that he could, if he pleased, communicate to men the power to pardon sins. But did it please Jesus Christ to communicate this power? This is a question of fact, and may be decided by referring to the record of his life and actions—the Bible.

We find in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, after Christ promised to build his Church upon St. Peter, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, that he con-

* Bayard Taylor.

tinues: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." Here an unlimited power to loose and bind is conveyed by Christ to St. Peter.

Some persons may quibble, and say, that there is no express power in this to pardon sins. We reply, if to Peter was given the power to "loose and bind whatsoever," sin being something, he of course had the power to pardon sin. But Christ himself has anticipated this objection.

We read in the twentieth chapter of St. John's Gospel, that on the very day of Christ's rising from the dead, he appeared to his disciples, who were gathered together in a room, with the doors shut, for fear of the Jews; he stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain,

they are retained." Here Christ gives, in plain, simple, and express words, the power to pardon sin to his apostles. The only escape from this conclusion is by denying the Bible outright, for these words of Christ are too plain and direct to be perverted to any other meaning than that which they bear on their face, and naturally signify.

Christ, as we clearly see, gave to the priests of his Church the power to pardon sin ; Protestantism repudiates all such power, and denies it to her ministers.

And this is an additional proof that Christ understood better than Protestantism the human heart, and its deep wants. For to say to the sinner, "Look to Jesus, he will pardon your sins ; his blood will wash your soul from all guilt,"—are vague expressions and phrases, without meaning, to one whose sins stare him terribly in the face. The fact of sin is there, before the sinner's eyes ; the fact of pardon must be equally sensible and evident, to give repose to the sinner's conscience, and consolation to his heart. Man cannot trust his own authority in this matter. To tell the guilty one to trust his

own authority here, is to tell him to lean on a broken reed. No, the sinner can have no permanent peace of mind or repose, till he hears the voice of the one he has offended, speaking pardon to his guilty soul.

Christ personally spoke pardon to the sinner; he gave to the priests of his Church the same power, and promised to ratify their exercise of it in heaven; Protestantism, in repudiating this, fails to represent Christ, and is utterly inadequate to meet the wants of the human heart. Alas for poor human nature, the very first step to be taken in order to be a Protestant, is to believe one's sins are pardoned, without any rational basis for it!

What says Protestantism to the heart's desire of communion with God?

Man's heart desires an intimate communion and personal union with God.

> "The streams of life we fain would seek,
> Yea, for life's source, our spirit yearns."*

Protestantism tells us that by faith, and faith alone, can man, in a Christian sense, commune

* Goethe.

with God. This, however, does not meet the wants of the heart. For man is not a pure spirit,—man is a creature, having, beside a soul, flesh and bones, and sinews, and warm blood running in his veins; and to meet his whole nature, this body of his needs also to be restored, and his flesh and bones to rejoice in God his Saviour.

To tell man to live on faith alone is to tell him to starve and famish, and to doom himself to death.

Union with Christ, to be complete, must be a union of mind, of heart, and of body,—union of man's whole nature with Him. Faith alone, therefore, as a means of communion with God, is insufficient.

Moreover, if faith means any thing, it means a firm and undoubting belief in all that God has revealed. But it is impossible to believe firmly, and without doubt, what is proposed to one's belief, unless it is proposed by an authority which cannot by any possible means err—a divine authority. In matters that fall under the range of our reason, reason's own authority is sufficient; but in matters which lie beyond the

reach of reason, such as the truths and mysteries of religion, if we are to believe them firmly, and without doubting, they must be proposed to us by an authority unerring and divine.

We have seen in our first question that Protestantism has denied and repudiated all unerring and divine authority in religion, and proclaimed the supremacy of private judgment, which is evidently subject to error in matters which lie beyond the reach of man's reason.

Granting, therefore, that faith is the only means of communion with God,—in the Protestant religion, no one can have communion with God, because no one, on a Protestant basis, can make an act of faith.

Strange as it may seem, still it is a fact, that the Protestant religion makes man's salvation, and communion with his God, depend on an act, which, according to its own principles, it is impossible for any one to make—an act of faith!

We, therefore, condemn Protestantism, first, because it does not offer any adequate means to satisfy man's desire of communion with God. Secondly, the means it does offer, cannot be embraced until one ceases to be Prot-

estant. Protestantism, therefore, is essentially an unpractical religion.

The great battle of life is at the hour of death. At that hour man is deprived of all fictitious helps. All disappear from his sight ; no neighbor, no friend, no relative, no father or mother can be of service in the struggle with death.

Has Protestantism no aid for the soul in this trying hour, when wrestling with its invisible foes ? Has she any thing

"To attend,
And comfort those in point of death which lay;
For their most needed comfort in the end,
When sin, and hell, and death, doe most dismay
The feeble soule departing hence away.
All is but lost that living we bestow,
If not well ended at our dying day." *

Protestantism at the dying hour draws the curtain around the bed of death, and leaves the soul alone in the dark, to struggle with its deathless foes as best it may. And its children in truth can say of it in that moment,

* Spenser.

"Thou tarriest while I die
And fall to nothing,
Yet I am styled
Thy child." *

And at the moment of death, with equal truth, they can add, in accents of despair :

"Cut off even in ..... my sins
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unannealed;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head." †

And when dead, its children are dead for ever to all its sympathies.

"The dead are dead,
And its oracles dumb when questioned." ‡

Thus leaving a large gap in the human heart to be filled up by all sorts of wild systems of error, diabolical invocations, and false spiritualisms.

Protestantism may abandon the soul at death, but the human heart does not.

"'Tis a cruel creed, believe it not!
Death to the good is a milder lot.
They are here—they are here." §

* Herbert. † Shakspeare. ‡ Longfellow. § Bryant.

And to fill up what it fails in doing, men grasp at every kind of superstitious practice to penetrate the other world, and to discover its secrets

> "Poor wanderers, ye are sore distrest
> To find the path which Christ has blest
> Tracked by His saintly throng;
> Each claims to trust his own weak will,
> Blind idol!—so ye languish still,
> All wranglers, and all wrong." *

In the first place, we condemn Protestantism, then, because it has no succor for man when he most needs it; and, secondly, because it fails to answer the mystic tendencies of the heart.

* Dr. Newman.

XVI.

Protestantism and Christian Perfection.

"Nothing have I on earth that I desire
Of all that I have seen, or known, or lov'd;
I would within me Heaven's smouldering fire,
And mortify the hopes that earthward rov'd,
For they have to my eyes but shadows prov'd;
But beckoning onward with angelic sign,
A beauteous vision hath for ever mov'd:
Still as I gaze puts on a face divine;
I stretch my hands in vain, and still in vain I pine."

BAPTISTRY.

WE have seen how many souls are seeking for a more spiritual and holier way of life; we have also discovered that Jesus Christ is a sublime and perfect model of such a life; and as a consequence, his Church representing Him,

should regard this class of souls as the truest representatives of her life, and look upon them as her most cherished children.

Now what says Protestantism to those who would follow closely the footsteps of Jesus Christ in the way of perfection? Does Protestantism hold up Christ before the world as the model man, and his life as the model life, and invite the world to follow Him? or does she conceal his heroic virtues, and fear their imitation?

Not to lose ourselves in vague generalities and idle declamations, let us examine in detail some of the principal virtues which Jesus Christ practised and pointed out to men as the way to perfection.

The whole life of Jesus was one of voluntary obedience. His incarnation in the womb of the Virgin Mary was an act of obedience to his heavenly Father. "Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not: but a body thou hast fitted for me. Then, said I: behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of me: that I should do thy will O God." *

The private life of Jesus Christ for thirty

* Hebrews x.

years was one of obedience, and its spirit is expressed in these few words of Holy Scripture. "He was subject to them," *—that is, to Mary and Joseph.

His public life was one act of obedience; obedience was the spring of all his actions. "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me, these things I speak. I do always the things that please him." † "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." ‡

Let us suppose that a young man should go to his pastor or some other Protestant minister, and say to him: "Rev. Sir, of late I have been reading seriously the Holy Scriptures, and I find that the life of Jesus Christ was one of obedience, from his birth to his death. Pray, dear Sir, tell me how I can follow his example, for such is my most earnest wish?"

What would the minister reply? He could but say that such ought to be the disposition of all faithful and sincere Christians. And then he would bid him read the Bible and pray to Christ, for he would direct his steps as He has

* Luke ii. † John viii. ‡ Philip. ii.

promised in these words, "Him that cometh to me, I will not cast out." *

"But excuse me, my Rev. Sir," the young man replies, "this is just what I have been doing, and it has led me to come to you to find out if there be not a way in the Protestant Church in which I can obey, as Jesus Christ obeyed, a visible, personal, living authority, such as he directed Paul and Cornelius to obey. I want an authority which I can obey, and in obeying which I can be sure that I am doing God's will. Such an authority Christ promised to establish upon earth when he said: 'He that heareth you heareth me.'" †

The minister answers, "For such an authority you will look in vain. It does not exist. You must look to Jesus. All other authority is human. And to obey a human authority in religion is slavery, degrading to our manhood as freemen and as Christians."

The young man retires, his mind filled with doubts and his heart ill at ease, and he says to himself: "What am I to do, I have read the Bible again and again, I have prayed repeatedly

* John vi. † Luke x.

for light and guidance, but I am only becoming more scrupulous, and my doubts are increasing. When I go to the professed ministers, they lead me utterly to despair of finding what my heart yearns for. Instead of being helped by them, I am led to say :

> "Is your work this,
> To hold me from my proper place?"*

This may be thought merely a fancy sketch ; we assure our readers that it is not.

What says Protestantism to Evangelical poverty ?

Jesus was poor. "Behold, thy King will come to thee, the just and Saviour; he is poor." † Jesus was poor, his parents were poor, he was born in a stable, his cradle was a manger, the offering made for him at the Temple was that of the poor, "a pair of pigeons," he had not the means to pay his personal tax, and such was his destitution that he declares : "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air their nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." ‡ How true are the words of the royal

* Tennyson. † Zach. ix. ‡ Matt. viii.

prophet spoken in the person of Christ. "I am a beggar, and poor." *

But Christ was not only poor, he had also a great affection for poverty. St. Luke in recording the sermon on the Mount, says: "And Jesus lifting up his eyes on his disciples said: Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of heaven." Now it is no small praise in favor of the virtue of poverty that Jesus Christ should rank it the first in the eight beatitudes. It is also worthy of attention, that in all other beatitudes the promise is made in the future, but in this it is in the present—"Yours *is* the kingdom of heaven." And listen how this king of beggars entices others by his promises to follow his example in the practice of voluntary poverty. "Every one that hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, and shall have life everlasting." † Voluntary poverty must be most precious in the sight of God if one is able, by it, to purchase the riches of heaven.

Christ was not only poor and had a great af-

* Psalm xxxix. † Matt. xix.

fection for poverty, but he invites all who would be perfect to follow his example. Once a young man said to him: "Good Master, what shall I do to be saved?" His answer was: "Keep the commandments." But these the young man had kept, and he now asks, "What yet is wanting me?" "Jesus saith: If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." *

As he approached death he became more and more enamored of poverty. His garments were stripped from his body, and naked he was nailed to the cross, poverty growing bold in the affection of her spouse.

> "With Christ she mounted the cross
> When Mary stay'd beneath." †

Even after death they did not loose their embrace, for his winding-sheet was a gift, and the tomb in which he was buried was a stranger's.

Let us now imagine that some earnest and sincere-minded youth in reading the Holy Scriptures should fall on these passages, and in the

* Matt. xix. † Dante.

simplicity of his heart believe in the promises of Christ, and determine to follow his Divine Master. Such things have happened. His heart breathing with the desire of self-sacrifice, he wends his way to the teachers of the gospel, to the Christian minister.

What will be his reception? What can it be, but one of pity for his simplicity, or surprise at such extravagant folly in this enlightened nineteenth century?

Take not our word for it, reader, but lay down this book, and go and propose to the next parson or minister in your neighborhood, to imitate Jesus Christ in his love for poverty, and you will be told that, "Such a way of life is not required of men, for the gifts and blessings of God are given us to enjoy, and not to throw away; that it is absurd and ridiculous to think of it, that no one can practise voluntary poverty; we must not carry things too far, and we must be careful of fanaticism, and must avoid appearing singular and extravagant." Such will be the substance of the answer you will receive, unless you are looked upon as a fool, or as an enthusiast beyond the reach of reasoning.

Thus are the noble purposes and generous affections of the heart stifled and chilled at their very source, by those who should be guides and serve as examples of the life which they condemn. Is it to be wondered at that many have cursed the Church and all its ministers in the bitterness of their souls?

What says Protestantism to those who would devote themselves wholly, both soul and body, to the service and love of God?

> "More bounteous aspects on me beam,
> The mightier transports move and thrill,
> So keep I fair, through faith and prayer,
> A virgin's heart and will." *

Jesus was a Virgin. He chose a Virgin Mother; a Virgin precursor; and a Virgin as his beloved disciple.

Jesus taught Virginity. When speaking to the Jews of the sacredness and indissolubility of marriage, his disciples said to him: "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry." He does not deny their conclusion, but admits its truth by saying that

* Tennyson.

it is not applicable to all. "All men," he says, "take not this word, but they to whom it is given." That to some is given the grace to lead a life of continence is evident from the words that follow: "For there are," he says, "eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take let him take it." * Here it is evident that our Lord approves of those who resolve to live a virgin life for the kingdom of heaven.

St. Paul, following the doctrine of his Divine Master, in speaking to married persons, says: "But I say to the unmarried and to the widow; it is good for them if they continue even as I," that is, as virgins. And he gives the following reasons for this advice. "He that is without a wife, is solicitous for the things that belong to God. But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and he is divided. The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of

* Matt. xxii.

the Lord ; that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married thinketh of the things of the world, and how she may please her husband." *

Among "the fruits of the spirit," he says to the Galatians, "are modesty, continence, chastity." †

St. John, in the Apocalypse, tells us that the reward of virginity is always to accompany Christ : "These are they who were not defiled with women : for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." ‡

If, now, some young man or maiden should earnestly desire to "be holy both body and spirit," and in imitation of the example of Jesus Christ, and in accordance with his counsels, should consecrate their virginity to God, what has Protestantism to say to that ?

Instantly you would hear a tirade issuing from the mouths of its ministers against this queen of Christian virtues, accompanied with exclamations as "shocking !" "cruel !" "sinful !" "criminal !" "contrary to nature !" "destruction to the human race and society !"

* 1 Cor. vii. † 1 Cor. v. ‡ 1 Cor. xiv.

Christ recognized a higher end in life than that of the family; a more sublime destiny than that of being a father, a happiness more elevated than that of domestic life, and

> "What then am I, if I may never hope
> The crown of our humanity to gain,
> Of all our energies the final scope?"*

But these Christian ministers are sunk so deep in the flesh, that they cannot even conceive of the possibility of the imitation of his example of living a virgin life. Their great Reformer tells us "that it is as impossible to live without a wife as to live without eating and drinking." And this is the gospel they believe, preach, and practise too.

Alas for the youthful and innocent hearts, that would seek for counsel and encouragement in realizing their bright dreams of a pure and holy life from men who have no esteem for that virtue which even the heathens admired!

We have one more question to ask of Protestantism.

What has Protestantism to say to the birth

* Goethe.

of Jesus Christ in a stable, to his bed of straw, his circumcision, his flight into Egypt, his passing whole nights in prayer, his not having a stone to lay his head upon, his fasting forty days and forty nights; all this was self-denial, penance, mortification,—and what has Protestantism to say to this?

On opening his great mission, Jesus began to preach and to say: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." * The end and scope of his preaching was, "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish." † The kingdom of heaven was the reward of penance. "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." ‡ Penance and mortification were the marks of his discipleship. "Whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." § He declares that his disciples "shall fast after he is taken away." ‖ In the sermon on the Mount he gives to them the rules they are to observe when fasting. "But thou when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face: that thou mayest not

* Matt. iii. † Luke xiii. ‡ Matt. xi. § Luke xiv. ‖ Matt. ix.

appear to men to fast, but to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth thee in secret will repay thee." * To crown his life as a perfect example of mortification, he suffered at death the most cruel torments.

Why this fasting, this self-denial, this suffering? Let Jesus Christ answer in his own words: "You call me Master and Lord: and you say well, for I am. . . . . For I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you do also." † "I am the way." ‡ "Follow me." § St. Peter says "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his footsteps." ‖ "They that are Christ's," says St. Paul to the Galatians, "have crucified their flesh." ¶ "Mortify your members," he says to the Colossians. But why? "that when Christ shall appear who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory." ** And to the Corinthians he says, "Always bearing about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." †† And of himself he says:

* Matt. vi. † John xiii. ‡ John xiv. § Matt. ix.
‖ 1 Peter ii. ¶ Gal. v. ** Colos. iii. †† 2 Cor. iv.

"I chastise my body and bring it into subjection." * In exhorting the Corinthians, he says, "Let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God. . . . . in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity." †

What has Protestantism to say to this most prominent virtue of Christianity, self-denial? Does it hold up the life of Jesus Christ as the model life to men? It is silent, or if it speaks, it is in the language and tone of contempt. It says to those who would copy the life of Jesus Christ that they wish to get to heaven by their own righteousness, or that "they are actuated by a morbid desire after perfection."

Alas, if the Bible be a true record of the life and doctrines of Christ, the less one has of Protestant Christianity, the better Christian.

Protestantism is inadequate to meet the wants of the Christian heart, because it has no room or expression for Christian asceticism.

We condemn Protestantism as not being the Church of Christ, because it fails to represent Christ; fails to give us a divine authority in her teachings, fails to produce Christian virtues

* 1 Cor. ix. † 2 Cor. vi.

in the hearts of men ; fails to guide the soul in the way of a Christian life ; fails in not claiming the power of pardoning sin ; fails by not believing the real presence of Christ upon earth ; fails by abandoning the soul at death and beyond the grave ; and fails, finally, in not giving an expression to the virtues which lead to Christian perfection.

A Christian Church that does not represent Christ in his life and offices is false, and to be looked upon as an imposition and a sham.

All that Protestantism can do is to make men feel more painfully their religious wants ; but in attempting to satisfy the wants that it has excited, it fails most signally. Like

"The meteor blaze
That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shined." *

Alas, how many earnest souls have been moved, by reading the Gospels, with the desire to imitate the divine life of Christ in the practice of heroic virtue, but have found opposition, contempt, and ridicule, where they expected

* Beattie.

sympathy, encouragement, and succor! how many sincere and conscientious minds have been forced to exclaim on account of the false light in which Protestantism has placed Christianity, "If this be Christianity, then I am no Christian;" thus showing, by their repudiation of this false Christianity, that they were, though they knew it not, all the truer followers of Christ! How many young, ardent, and generous souls have been led into the Protestant ministry wishing to devote themselves to the service of their Divine Master, and in the course of time all the higher and holier feelings of the soul have been wasted away or stifled in them! how many are still vainly struggling to realize them in the midst of opposition! how many have given up the battle in despair! how many have become infidel in heart, though Christian in name!

This is thy work, O Protestantism, and the thousands of hapless souls whom thou hast deceived by thy promises of truth condemn thee, as a barrier to their perfection, a mockery to their hopes.

XVII.

The Church and Rome.

* * * * * * *

"Look into the Church from the market square:
Nothing but gloom and darkness there!
Shrewd Sir Philistine sees things so:
Well may he narrow and captious grow,
Who all his life on the outside passes.

"But come, now, and inside we'll go!
Now round the holy chapel gaze;
'Tis all one many-colored blaze;
Story and emblem, a pictured maze,
Flash by you:—'tis a noble show.
Here feel as sons of God baptized,
With hearts exalted and surprised!"

GOETHE.

IF there be upon earth such a thing as the real Church of Christ, it must teach the same teachings, it must live the same life, it must

work the same works, it must image, express, and body forth Jesus Christ himself. As He was the Teacher and Redeemer to the generations in which he lived, so must his Church be the Teacher and the Redeemer to all generations of the world until the end of time.

We have tried Protestantism, and found it wanting. It is inadequate to satisfy the wants of the heart, or to meet the demands of the intellect. Protestantism does not represent Christ.

What now shall we do? What hope remains, or is there any left? Is the idea of the Church a dream? Is Christianity a delusion? Was Christ a mistaken enthusiast?—a merely human philosopher, whose system must die out when his personal influence has had time to pass away? At any rate, we will be honest; and to be honest and Christian men, and yet to be Protestant, we cannot.

What shall we do? Shall we wait for another helper than Christ to come? Alas! the world has had a long opportunity, so far as time is concerned, to find a greater helper than Christ; and many centuries may roll on without the sign of a new Saviour.

On the other hand, what help can we find for ourselves, in satisfying this demand for a substitute for Christ? The heart and intellect of man, each, and both, ask and need a guide, a master—a Divine Guide and Master—a Redeemer. One no stronger than ourselves cannot redeem us. "Frater non redemit."

Alas! we cannot answer our own wants, nor can we afford to wait for "the new Teacher"—"the Church of the Future." Let one, who is now in eternity, speak of her companions who waited: "Of those who, in life's morning, I saw touched by the light of hope, many have seceded. Some have become voluptuaries; some mere family men, who think it quite life enough to win bread for a half dozen people, and treat them decently; others are lost through indolence and vacillation. Yet some remain constant." *

Of these constant ones, how many now remain? If it were not invidious, we might speak more definitely. To wait, means, in other words, to yield up the soul, or to stifle its hopes and aspirations, and court the insensibility of

* Margaret Fuller.

death. Such waiting is not courage, it is not fortitude, it is not patience; it is cowardice, or weakness; it is to surrender life, rather than dare to seek the truth, and obey it.

We, for our part, will on; and if we die, it will be with our loins girded, our lamps in hand, and our back still turned to lower modes of life, which cannot satisfy the aspirations of the soul. We will go forward with the humility that is willing to believe, and the courage that fears not to obey.

We will go forward, but whither? To go outside of Christianity without the hope of one greater than Christ, is to go back, and plunge one's self once more into the darkness of heathenism. To attempt to improve Christianity from within, unless we are superior to Christ, is only to add another to the catalogue of religious frauds and impositions.

The path grows narrow and narrower. There is no escape! What is left us? *Rome!!*

What! Rome? Is it not an acknowledged fact that Rome and Romanism, Pope and Popery, have failed? Is not Romanism dead? nay, even buried? Would you in mockery of

our woe send us to Rome, who, even the gentle Scott tells us,

> "Damns each free-born deed and thought?"

Is it there, that the hunger of the soul after truth, and its cravings for love and beauty, are to be appeased? After all our weary wanderings, are we then to be brought back to the spot on which we turned our backs at the outset of our inquiries after truth?

Prejudice, or fear, shall not keep us back in our search after truth. Little do we care, so that we find it, whether the truth is at Mecca, London, or at Rome. Under God's heaven, we fear nothing; and God's truth we shall, and must have, if it be on earth, cost what it may. He who loves the truth with his whole soul, fears nothing, and no prejudice or sacrifice will keep him from embracing it. Let Rome have a hearing!

What does Rome say to the questions that Protestantism has failed to answer?

What says Rome to the need of an unerring and divine authority in religion?

Rome declares distinctly and emphatically that in religion there is no other than an unerring and divine authority, and that none other should be obeyed. Such is Rome's answer to the question of authority.

Rome tells us more; she says, that to deny and repudiate in religion all human authority, and to believe and obey nothing that does not rest on a divine basis, this it is to be Catholic. Such is Rome's answer to the supreme want of the heart—obedience. Rome, therefore, imposes upon no one a human authority. The man that occupies St. Peter's chair, as man, is no more than the measure of any other man. The man that occupies St. Peter's chair, as the successor of St. Peter, as the head of Christ's Church, and his representative on earth, his voice is Christ's voice. His voice is not only Christ's voice to others, but also to himself. The Pope, as a man and as a Catholic, is bound, first of all, to obey the authority of Christ, of which he is the representative, central organ, and mouthpiece.

The least instructed and most simple-minded Catholic obeys the authority of no man, whether he be a priest, a bishop, an archbishop, a cardi-

nal, or the Pope himself. No Catholic, as Catholic, owes obedience to any other authority than the authority of God. Let any one venture to claim any other authority, or present any thing contrary to the divinely received dogmas and doctrines of the Church, and the whole Catholic world would be up in arms in an instant.

The Pope is equally subject to the doctrine of the Church as the poorest and humblest Catholic in the United States, and the conditions of salvation are the same for him as for any other Catholic. His obedience is just as great. It would not be a thing unheard of, for a Pope to be refused absolution by a simple priest, his confessor. From this point of view, there reigns a most perfect equality in the Catholic Church. And while all obey, none feel degraded; on the contrary, the authority being divine, obedience, while it gives security, repose, and peace to the heart, elevates, ennobles, and gives freedom to the mind. Only a Catholic in truth can say:

> "From youth I have been tutor'd to obey
> My parents first, and then the Deity;

And thus obeying, ever hath my soul
Known sweetest freedom." *

If it is asked upon what grounds the Catholic Church claims this divine authority. They are at hand in Christ's own words: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." † "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." ‡ "He that heareth you, heareth me." § "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." ‖ A Catholic can say boldly, and yet without rashness: "If I am deceived, it is Christ who has deceived me."

What is more, the Catholic Church is alive, and conscious that

"The Eternal Son,
Her true Shekinah, unrevealed to sight,
Dwells in her living courts
For ever one." ¶

And it is this consciousness, that gives to her alone, the boldness to claim to be the representative and organ of Christ's authority upon earth;

* Goethe. † Matt. xvi. ‡ John xxi. § Luke x.
‖ Matt. xx. ¶ The Cathedral.

an authority, which, because it is divine, can alone satisfy all the wants of the heart, at the same time that it meets all the demands of man's intellect.

"Ancient of mothers, in thy barriers old,
With those that love Thee, is true liberty.
* * * * * * *
Then where flee we for refuge but to Thee,
And thine obedience?"

XVIII.

Childhood.

"Sweet childhood, shadow of celestial Love,
Train'd to look up, and hold a parent's hand,
And ever lift the eyes to One above;
Which knows not yet, while it obeys, command,
Hopes all, and all believes."

BAPTISTRY.

WHAT says Rome to childhood?

Rome says every thing. The Church of Rome is the church of childhood. Lead children into her precincts, and you will soon discover that she pours through every avenue of the mind of childhood treasures of wisdom. The altar, the crucifix, the robed priests, the surpliced acolytes, the pictures and the statues of

holy saints, the stained windows, the organ, the bells,—all combine together to give to the child's picturesque-loving mind, a better and more sublime idea of religion than years of reading and preaching can do.

"These methinks
Touch children as akin to the unseen,
The infinite and wild that speak of heaven,
The image hid in chambers of the heart
Which pants for the ideal, in a soul
Fresh from the hands of God." *

Thus the Catholic Church, like her divine Master, draws from the mouth of babes and sucklings her most perfect praise.

"From the embraces of the Catholic Church," says an eloquent writer, "the true mother august, even in her most sorrowful moments dropping a tender tear, no child left to its own sweet nature has ever yet been seen to recoil; for not only the spirit of those who represent her, like genius, loves to caress little things, and sing the songs of children, to talk not always of kings and magnates,—'arma virumque cano,'—but

* Baptistry.

much oftener sweetly and wisely of what is humble, and to appearance puerile. But before a child's awakening intelligence Catholicity stands full in view, invested with infinite charms."

And how naturally does Catholicity perpetuate and develope in the heart, the virtues of childhood, by supplying to youth the blessing of a spiritual guide and father. When reason opens its eye, the priest is there to keep it steadily fixed upon its true object—God. In the father confessor, he sees the type of Jesus Christ, as the divine friend, brother, and guide. Thus, youth is never interrupted, but continued and ennobled as age advances :—

"Light are their steps who in life's earliest dawn
The mountain-tops of Heavenly life ascend,
Brushing the dew-drops from the spangled lawn;
Nor ever from the straighter path descend,
Fixing their eyes upon their journey's end;
Sweetest, best thoughts are theirs, such as have striven
With childhood, and with dawning conscience blend,
To flee all other love but that of Heaven,
Ere weigh'd to earth with sin, and much to be forgiven."*

* Baptistry.

When the time comes to choose a path in life, then it is that the young man and maiden find in the father-confessor what no friend, no confidant, no father or mother, can supply. They find in him one who is free from all selfish interests and private views; one who looks only for the true happiness and final good of the soul; one to whom they can discover all their hopes and fears, aspirations, and doubts; in a word, what is inmost in their souls, and that, with perfect confidence and trust. That painful experience, and dangerous crisis in life, when the soul questions God, its destiny, and even its own existence, is something unknown to those who are born Catholics. Their life springs up, flows on, and is spent as naturally as that of the flower, and at the end "fulfilment meets desire." They alone can say: "Oh, how beautiful is my life! How happy will be my end!"

"Thrice happy they, who as they draw more near
More clearly can discern their being's end,
Gird up their loins with hope, and year and year
Unto their stable home still steadier wend;
And from the sinuous road will still ascend
Unto the straiter path, while the calm ray

Lightens them step by step, nor ever bend
Their firm resolve from that their steadfast way,
Until they are absorbed in the Eternal Day!" *

From the same source spring that innocence, peace, and cheerfulness which is pictured on the face of Catholic youth.

"Ere sin hath brush'd away the morning bloom,
When streaks of purple morn the cheek illume,
And light the drops of the baptismal dew!
It is a precious sight which angels view
In trembling joy and hope." *

And this sight we look for elsewhere in vain. The faces of our people bear traces of inward weariness, of restlessness, of deep questioning and doubt. How many among us, for want of a true friend and guide, have mistaken their path and vocation in life, and thus are lost to themselves, lost to society and humanity. And the unrest and misery, consequent upon this failure, or mistake, they attribute to false social organizations. Whereas had they been in the bosom of God's Church, their minds would have been di-

* Baptistry.

rected to their proper objects, and they would have found a place for their activity. In a word, they would have clearly seen their true destiny, and found themselves in the path which leads to it, from their earliest childhood.

How deeply is felt the want of true guidance and spiritual direction outside of the divine society of the Church of God. How many seek in vain, in their friends, what the Church alone in her consecrated priests can supply. Many pressed with the want, make even strangers their confidants, and yet find no light, no peace, no answer. Some yield to despair of ever finding it; others, in the hope of discovering an answer, have entered upon a false and diabolical mysticism; others, again, to drown the feelings of their higher nature, which only seem, like fiends, to harry their bosoms, have yielded up their souls to a voluptuous unconcern. Not one has gone on steadily in the path of a divine life. Those who have not gone back, stand, as it were, upon enchanted ground; they seem to themselves to advance, but it is only a change; they seem to announce new truths, but it is only a tame repetition; they appear to live, but

it is a life without freshness or hope. They are encircled and imprisoned by self.

There is no other progress in life than heavenward. But to progress towards God, two things are necessary. First, the knowledge of the way to God. Secondly, a divine guide. The Church affords both. The first in her dogmas; the second, in her spiritual directors.

As regards the necessity of direction, let it be known, once for all, that without a special application of the divine law to all our actions, it is impossible ever to free the soul from self, unite it to God, and gain a divine life. The end of direction, therefore, is to assist the soul in applying the divine law to all its actions, and thus free it from all hindrances to its union with God. The end of direction is not to mark out a way for the soul to walk in, but to show it the way God has marked out for it; it is to assist the soul in following the lead of God. The direction of souls to God is the most sublime of all sciences,—"ars artium regimen animarum." The knowledge of this art is nowhere found but in the Catholic Church, and her priesthood alone are in perfect possession of it.

Thus does the Catholic Church by her consecrated priests answer the need of guidance, which every soul feels, and feels as the greatest of all needs, when it would earnestly give itself to God.

"Oh, Rome! my country! City of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee." *

* Byron.

XIX.

Confession.

"Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my life be at the root."

TENNYSON.

WHAT says Rome to him who has deviated from the path that leads to his true destiny—the sinner?

The Church of Rome has sounded the very depths of the sinner's heart, and offers for its wounds and miseries, a complete and satisfactory remedy in the sacrament of penance, where the guilt-stained soul is

"Wash'd
As pure, as sin in baptism."*

* Shakspeare.

The Church of Rome opens her arms like her divine founder to all who have missed the path of virtue, in seeking happiness; and conscious of that divine power which he promised when he said: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," * she can say in his own words: "Come unto me ye that labor and are burthened," ye that have sought happiness and have found naught but disappointment, and in your misery exclaim:—

> "Alas! I have no hope nor health,
> Nor peace within, nor calm around;" †

"Come unto me, and I will refresh you" with life, with hope, with peace, and with rest.

Ah! let no one proudly say that he has no need of this mother's love, care, and heavenly gifts. 'Tis not so; for what is it that takes from thee

> "Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?" ‡

but sin, which lies concealed, like poison, in the recesses of thy heart, and, there corrupting,

* Matt. xxviii. † Shelley. ‡ Shakspeare.

makes thy soul sick? 'Tis not so. The stings of remorse in thy lonely hours, the pains and tortures of the soul on thy death-bed, give the lie to thy lips; for,

> "Though thy slumber may be deep,
> Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
> There are shades that will not vanish,
> There are thoughts thou canst not banish."*

'Tis not so, or else thou art either an angel or a demon; for to sin, is a part of human frailty; to seek to free the soul from its burthen, by confession, is the natural instinct of man; but to conceal and harbor sin in one's bosom, is the part of a demon.

You need no confession! Why, then, do you make the wide world the witness and confidant of your crimes, your misdeeds, and your shameful weaknesses? For what else is the great mass of our modern popular literature but an examen of conscience, publicly made by the author, before his readers, and the whole wide world? And so deeply are his vices rooted in

* Byron.

his heart, that not satisfied with presenting them under the attractive disguise of imagery, they must be spread out to cater to the tastes of his readers, in all their filthy and disgusting details.

Why, no one whose conscience is not blinded by sin, can take up a volume of the popular literature of our times, and read a page of it, without detecting some inordinate passion, or deadly sin, rankling in the heart of its author.

It may be said, that it is not the man, but the author, who speaks in its pages. We say, it is the man himself. Let us look at Germany. The great author of that country, and one of whom it may be said that he has left his impress on modern literature, more than any other writer, is Goethe. In his "Sorrows of Werther," he advocates, and defends suicide. Now, what does he himself tell us in his Autobiography? Listen. "I had," he says, "a costly and highly polished dagger. I laid this every night beside my bed; and before I put out the light, I tried if I could succeed in forcing the sharp point a couple of inches into my bosom." In his work called "Elective Affinities," we have the doc-

trine laid down, and exemplified, that man is a creature subject to certain occult affinities, which he is irresistibly forced to obey. And in "Wilhelm Meister," we have this most subtle and licentious philosophy displayed in a most seductive form. Who are the heroes, and what are the characters, who figure in these scenes, but the echoes of his own life and acts?

In France, from the time of Rousseau's "Confessions," in which he makes no attempt to conceal, but rather glories in his criminalities and baseness; down to George Sand, the popular literature is one gross attack upon social virtue and morality, and upon all that is held sacred, holy, and divine.

What have we in England? Byron, who has the distinguished honor of being the father of the modern satanic school of poets,—if this be not robbing Milton of his glory,—Byron, who would have us believe him when he says:—

> "Whate'er
> I may have been, or am, doth rest between
> Heaven and myself—I shall not choose a mortal
> To be my mediator:"

and in the meanwhile blazons his licentiousness on every page of his writings, and makes the whole world the confidant of his crimes and miseries! The number of infidel and licentious books written by English authors, and read by English people, presents no flattering picture of the boasted progress of the English nation in civilization. We risk nothing in saying that one may take up almost any of our modern poets, who would in their simplicity have us believe that their mission is divine, and we should not find one that is not infected with idolatry of women and of self, and it requires no great powers of discrimination to tell in what this eventually terminates.

Even those among ourselves who pride themselves on their moral culture and delicate sense of propriety, often publish things, not concerning themselves alone, but their friends, which shock a rightly instructed conscience, and which had been much better hidden and forgotten under the seals of sacramental confession; as, for example, the authors of Margaret Fuller's life.

We say to such, you have no means to relieve

your consciences, so you make your confessions to your friends, to strangers, and even publish them to the world. You cannot help it, and we know it, for confession is the natural effort of the conscience to relieve itself of the burthen of sin, and its cry after help. The wretched man who is distracted by remorse or by chagrin has need of a friend, a confidant, who will listen to him and sometimes direct him. But how much easier, how much better would it be for society, even in a temporal view, leaving aside for a moment the eternal interests of the soul, if instead of making one like yourselves, or the public, your confidant, you would kneel to one who had the divine power to relieve your conscience of sin, and the science and skill to cure your soul of its ravages.

"One bred apart from worldly noise,
To study souls, their cures, and their diseases." *

How many crimes would have been unknown in society, if such men as Goethe, Schiller, Rousseau, Byron, Shelley, Bulwer, had sought

* Dryden.

relief for their consciences in the divine sacrament of penance, instead of flooding society with the details of their secret vices and miseries, and thus feeding men's passions until they ripen into crime.

In confirmation of the truth of this statement, listen to what Goethe says of "the Sorrows of Werther," which was the exciting cause of so many suicides in Germany. "I felt," says he in his Autobiography, "after having published Werther, once more happy and free, and entitled to a new life, as if I had made a general confession." Such are the means to which men are forced to resort, in order to relieve their consciences and hearts, when a false religion offers them no help, or when they are too ignorant or too proud to accept the easy, efficacious, and divine remedy which the true Church affords. They rid their hearts of the passions and miseries with which they are filled, by infecting the innocent and unsuspecting ; they gain to their own minds a so-called peace and freedom, by corrupting the pure and virtuous. An admirable method this to purify the heart and conscience of sin ! These very men, too, and their admirers would

have us believe that they are called to aid humanity in her progressive destiny !

How natural, how manly, how divine is the Catholic economy of purifying and restoring peace to the guilty conscience !

XX.

Continuation.

"Attainable by all,
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God,
For him to whom I speak an easy road
Lies open."

WORDSWORTH.

"HAVE you ever examined at bottom the meaning of that word Confessor? that divine friend, in whom friendship is raised to a Sacrament, and who is found in every church, seated, waiting for you? this man, this stranger to whom you open the book of your conscience, in whom you have more confidence than in the whole world besides?" Perhaps not; then let us do it now in few and simple words.

First, he is a man like any one of us; born with the same passions, suffering from the same temptations, and not exempt from human weaknesses; one "who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err, because he himself also is compassed with infirmity." * One who would have committed, if the grace of God had not kept him, the same sins of which we have been guilty. He knows all this, and is conscious of it all; he sympathizes, therefore, with the sinner, whom he regards as his fallen brother or sister; he is touched at his misery and distress, and feels for him a tender and deep friendship.

But he is more than a man, he is a priest; one "ordained for men in the things that appertain to God." * One to whom Christ intrusted the power to pardon sin, when he said: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." The thought that he has the divine power to relieve the sinner of the burthen and misery consequent upon sin, increases his sympathy tenfold; it gives birth to a high, noble, divine affection, an affection surpassing all human sympathies, and unknown and unexperienced in

* Hebrews v.

other breasts than in those of the priests of God. It is more than the interest of a friend. It is more than the interest of a father. It is something communicated to his heart of the interest felt for souls by Christ, the soul's Creator and Redeemer.

Moreover it is not to be forgotten that this man, this priest, is also a judge ; a judge of consciences. When Christ gave to him the power to forgive sins, he added : "Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Whenever, therefore, the sinner comes to the confessor, there is a question to be decided ; shall his sins be forgiven, or shall they be retained? This question the confessor must decide, and, therefore, he is a judge to acquit or condemn. He must acquit those who are sincerely penitent, he must condemn those who are not. Would it not be a sacrilegious use of his power to pronounce absolution over a sinner who shows no sorrow for his sins, nor resolution to amend his life? Let our great English poet introduce us to this court of conscience, where, it would seem, he was not himself a stranger, and show us how its judgments were passed.

" *Friar.* Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?
Julietta. I do; and bear the shame most patiently.
Friar. I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,
And try your penitence, if it be sound,
Or hollowly put on.
Julietta. I'll gladly learn."

To this man, with more than human sympathies; to the priest, with more than human power, the penitent sinner approaches, anxious to obtain the pardon of his sins, the relief of his sorrows. Should any fear or lingering doubt hinder him from acknowledging his misdeeds, the priest, in gentle voice and friendly accents, encourages him and says:

" Thy woes impart,
Tell all thy sorrows, all thy sin;
We cannot heal the throbbing heart,
Till we discover the wound within." *

Unlike other tribunals, here the judge is not the accuser, but the sinner's friend. Here the sinner is his own accuser, and the judge seeks only to pardon. Encouraged by such thoughts, the sinner unfolds his conscience, discovers his

* Crabbe.

sins, and opens to view the hidden wounds of his heart. And this calls forth the exercise of a new function of the office of the confessor, that is, the office of a spiritual physician.

The confessor, as spiritual physician, must seek and find out the fatal sources of sin, and furnish the means to close them. He must prescribe such remedies, as are needed, to cure the soul of the sad effects which sin has left in the heart, and endeavor to restore it to perfect health, and give to the penitent such rules of life as will place him out of danger of falling again. In one word, he has the same duties to discharge for the soul, as the bodily physician has for the body.

He is also called by the endearing name of "father," because it is a part of his duty to perform the office of a spiritual father to those who come to him with their spiritual needs. No love is more disinterested, liberal, prudent, patient, indefatigable, than that of a father. The duty of a priest, as spiritual father, is to advise, counsel, encourage, console, and when called to do so, to correct, reprove, and admonish the penitent, his spiritual child.

St. Francis de Sales, when he saw that a penitent had some difficulty in opening his conscience, was accustomed to say to him: "Am I not your father?" and he would repeat this till he was answered, "yes!" and thus he won his confidence. Speaking of a young man whom he had received into the Church, and whose confession of twenty years he had heard, he says: "I was beside myself with joy; how many kisses of peace did I not bestow on him," and then in the affection of his heart exclaims: "Oh, there is no one but I and the good God who love sinners." Such is the paternal feeling of the priest's heart.

It is to such a man, who is at the same time priest, confessor, judge, spiritual physician, and father, representing Christ in his chief characteristics, that the penitent acknowledges his sins, and receives from his lips the remedies for his spiritual maladies, and the counsel he needs to overcome the difficulties that beset his path. Now the moment for the priest to pronounce the words of absolution arrives, and bowed down with sorrow, the penitent sees the consecrated hands lifted up to heaven and hears the words,

"Absolve te," which, by a divine efficacy, free him from the bonds and miseries of sin, renew the image of God in his soul, and fill his heart with such peace and joy, that even nature, as if participating in his happiness, smiles and seems clothed again with primal innocence.

Such is the answer of the Catholic Church to the sinner. An answer perfectly adapted to the wants of man's heart, and at the same time a complete, efficacious, a divine remedy for all its diseases and miseries.

> "While a false religion
> Smiles on—nor ventures to unmask
> Man's heart, and view the hell that's there."*

She in her perfect adaptation to the wants of the sinner's heart, in her unceasing and successful efforts to rescue it from the slavery of sin, in her practical treatment of it, shows most plainly and conclusively that the spirit which actuated him who came to save sinners, actuates her,—that she is a perfect copy of the Saviour of sinners, and the physician of souls.

* Byron.

It seems to us that we hear the voice of one weighed down with the burden of guilt and woe, saying: "Ah! could I only believe this, I should be perfectly happy, I would ask no more!" We answer: Why should you not be happy? Is God not able to make you happy? Did he give wants to the heart of man, which are beyond his power to satisfy? "No; but I am a sinner!" But cannot God forgive your sins, and if he chooses, commission his apostles to exercise the same power? Of course God can. If so, tell me then what fact in sacred Scriptures is more plain than the commission of Jesus Christ to his apostles, and consequently to his priesthood, to forgive and retain sins? Could you only believe it! why, not to believe it, is to contradict the Gospels, to deny Jesus Christ, and to attempt to get to heaven by some other way than that which Christianity opens for sinners. Could you believe it! why, not to believe it and yet hope to get to heaven, requires a greater amount of faith than to believe it.

Could you believe this, you would be happy! Indeed you would, for of all the pains of the soul, the greatest is the remorse of a guilty con-

science, and by sacramental confession, man is delivered from the pains of remorse, and the soul is restored to

> "A peace above all earthly dignities,
> A still and quiet conscience."*

And once more we seem to see heaven's bright door stand wide open.

Say not that it is degrading to our manhood to confess our misdeeds to a fellow-man. This action, so far from being degrading, is the very means of raising man from the degradation into which he has fallen by sinning. This is an action which springs from the firm resolve to be no longer the slave of the lower appetites, but to triumph over them, and be their master. Is this not to assert one's manhood, and the dignity of human nature? It is, and more; for it wins for one the approving smiles of the whole court of heaven.

"Wretched is he," says an eloquent writer, "who is ignorant of the sublime duty of confession! Still more wretched who, to shun the

* Shakspeare.

common herd, as he believes, feels himself called upon to regard it with scorn! Is it not a truth, that even when we know what is required of us to be good, that self-knowledge is a dead letter to us? Reading and reflection are insufficient to impel us to it; it is only the living speech of a man gifted with power which can here be of avail. The soul is shaken to its centre, the impressions it receives are more profound and lasting. In the brother who speaks to you there is a life, a living and breathing spirit;—one which you can always consult, and which you will vainly seek for, either in books or in your own thoughts." *

Sacramental confession degrading! Why, it is a necessity of our nature, and one of the deepest and most urgent necessities. Sacramental confession degrading! Why, not only is it the efficacious means of raising man up from degradation, but do you not know, it is for want of it that some of the most gifted minds have made shipwreck of all religious faith, and yielded themselves up to the sensual gratification of the most degrading passions.

* Silvio Pellico.

We have a striking example of this truth in the life of Goethe. Goethe was brought up a Lutheran, and perhaps it would be well to state here, that the Lutherans retained more of the Catholic Church than any other Protestant sect ; and, among other things, confession. It was, however, soon regarded among them rather as a pious practice than a sacrament of penance.

Goethe, after giving, in a few words, an account of his early religious instruction, says: "But I found my good-will and my aspirations in this important matter, still more badly paralyzed by dry, spiritless, beaten paths, when I would approach the confessional. I was, indeed, conscious within myself of many failings, but yet of no gross faults ; and that very consciousness diminished them, since it directed my attention to the moral strength which lay in me, and which, with resolution and perseverance, was at last to become indeed master of the old Adam. We were taught that we were much better than the Catholics, for this very reason : that we were not obliged to acknowledge any thing in particular in the confessional, and that it would never be at all proper, even when we wished to do so.

This last did not seem right to me ; for I had the strangest religious doubts, which I would gladly have had cleared up on such an occasion. Now, since this should not be done, I composed a confession for myself, which, inasmuch as it well expressed my state of mind, would have made an intelligent man acquainted, in general terms, with that which I was forbidden to tell him in detail. But when I entered the ancient choir of the Barefoot Friars, approached the quaint latticed closets where their reverences used to be found for this purpose ; when the sexton opened me the door, and I saw myself shut up in the narrow place, face to face with my ghostly grandsire, and he bade me welcome with his feeble nasal voice, all the clearness of my mind and heart vanished at once ; the well-committed confession speech would not pass my lips. In my embarrassment, I opened the book which I had in hand, and read from it the first short form I saw, which was so general that any body might have spoken it with quite a safe conscience. I received absolution, and withdrew, neither hot nor cold ; went the next day with my friends to the table of the Lord, and for a

couple of days behaved myself as was becoming in one after so holy an act." *

We are somewhat inclined, after reading this, to take back a part of the blame we laid upon Goethe for publishing to the world his confession in his writings, and lay it at the door of that false religion in which he had the misfortune to be brought up, and which failed to afford that relief which his conscience demanded.

But we have not heard the whole of this sad history. Being deprived of the means of opening his conscience, and obtaining the direction of which he, at that time, stood so much in need, he became a prey to religious scruples.

"In the sequel," he continues, "however, there came over me that evil, which (by reason of our religion's being complicated through its many dogmas, founded on texts of Scripture, which admit of various interpretations) attacks scrupulous men in such a manner that it draws after it a hypochondriacal condition, and this raises their fixed ideas to the highest pitch. I have known many men who, with quite a sensible manner of thinking and living, could

* Autobiography.

not get rid of meditating about the sin against the Holy Ghost, and of apprehension lest they had committed it. A similar trouble threatened me on the subject of the Communion. The text that one who unworthily partakes of the sacrament, 'eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,' had, very early already, made a deep impression upon me. Every fearful thing that I had read in the histories of the middle ages of the judgments of God, of those most strange ordeals by red hot iron, flaming fire, by the water that caused to swell; and even what the Bible tells us, of the draught which agrees well with the innocent, but makes the guilty to swell and burst,—all this my imagination pictured to itself; and I applied to my own case whatever was most frightful; since false vows, hypocrisy, perjury, blasphemy, all seemed to weigh down the unworthy one at this most holy act, which was so much the more horrible as no one could dare to pronounce himself worthy; and the forgiveness of sins, by which every thing was at last to be done away, was found limited by so many conditions, that one could not, with certainty, dare to take the liberty of appropriating it to himself.

"These gloomy scruples troubled me to such a degree, and the explanations which they would represent as sufficient, seemed to me so bald and feeble, that the bugbear only gained fearful consequence thereby; and as soon as I had reached Leipzig, I tried to cut myself loose altogether from my connection with the Church. How oppressive, then, must Gellert's exhortations have been to me! whom, with his otherwise laconic style, which he was compelled to adopt to repel our obtrusiveness, I was unwilling to trouble with such singular questions,—the more so, as in my calmer hours I was ashamed of them myself; and this strange anguish of conscience, together with Church and altar, I at last left completely behind me."

That is to say, finding Protestantism inadequate to satisfy the religious wants of his soul, he abandons his conscience, his God, and whatever of Christianity remained in his heart. Thus did this great and most highly gifted soul make shipwreck of the Christian faith, and become, in after life, bankrupt in morals, for want of sacramental confession.

Let us conclude this chapter with the remarks

of a celebrated writer, and one of the most original and boldest thinkers of the last century, on sacramental confession. "In this," he says, "as in all things else, the Church has only revealed to man the knowledge of himself; she has taken possession of his inclinations, of his lasting and universal convictions, laid bare to the light those ancient foundations, has cleansed them from every stain, from every alien mixture. She has honored them with the impress of the Divinity; and on this natural basis, she has erected the supernatural theory of Penance and Sacramental Confession." *

* Count De Maistre.

XXI.

Eucharist.

"Oh, show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee!
He did; He came. Oh, my Redeemer dear,
After all this, canst Thou be strange?

"So many years baptized, and not appear,—
As if Thy love could fail, or change!
Oh, show Thyself to me,
Or take me up to Thee!"

HERBERT.

WHAT says Rome to the deep craving of man's heart for love and union with God?

The Catholic Church has a full, adequate, and satisfactory answer to this inquiry;—an answer that no one can appreciate, unless he already has the highest conception of love.

Love is never satisfied with loving, and is not content until the object loved is wholly in its possession. Love aims always at union.

On the other hand, the object loved is never at rest till it has given itself wholly to its lover. God's love, therefore, for man, cannot be satisfied, until man wholly surrenders himself to God's love; nor can man's love for God be satisfied, until God gives himself entirely to man's love.

God must not only give himself wholly to man, to satisfy his love, but he must give himself in such a way as fitly to be received by man.

The Catholic Church presents to man the Blessed Sacrament as the answer of the deep cry of the soul after love. She tells us, that in Holy Communion is received God entire—the body and blood, the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ confirmed this: when instituting the Blessed Sacrament, he said, "Take ye and eat; this is my body. Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood." * "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." † "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." †

* Matt. xxvi. † John vi.

Besides this, there is another reason why God should give himself to man. It is this; whatever is received as food, must in some way partake of the life it goes to support and sustain; otherwise, starvation and death follow. This is a law of all attraction and life. Now, in the Christian soul, there is a divine life; a divine food, therefore, is necessary for its support, growth, and perfection.

The Catholic Church tells us that we receive this divine food in Holy Communion. Jesus Christ again confirms what she teaches. He says: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you." "I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." *

Thus, the Catholic Saviour is not an abstract Saviour, nor a dead Saviour, separated from us by nineteen centuries, but a real, living, personal Saviour, dwelling in the midst of us, even in our very hearts—our heart's life!

Let those, therefore, who look for, or dream of "a Church of the Future," first learn what the existing and present Church is, and teaches;

* John.

let them venture to believe her teachings, and dare to obey them. It is a want, on their part, of truthfulness and true courage, to look or ask for what is greater or better, before they know what the present is, and have practised the good it demands. Until they have done this, they have no right to ask or claim more. Until this is done, they have no right to utter a word of complaint. Until this is done, their place is that of an humble disciple ; their duty, that of a faithful servant.

When these dreamers of a "New Teacher," or a "Future Church," shall have the heroism to venture to believe what the simplest of two hundred and fifty millions of Catholics believes, then, and not until then, will they be rightly entitled to speak of the Future. Poor dreamers ! God has done more for man, and loved him more, than you, in your highest flights of imagination, ever thought of ; and know it, too, that in the heart of that poor Catholic girl in your kitchen, there dwells a heroism of faith and love, of which your heart never had even a faint conception.

If there be aught better or greater to be ex-

pected in the future, it will come by those who fulfil all the conditions of the existing Church, and not through men who are too blind to see, or too cowardly to acknowledge her claims, and obey her divine truths.

The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion, connected as it is with the great sacrifice of the Mass, is the central mystery of the Catholic faith. It is the complete, full, and adequate expression of God's love to man. God cannot do more. God cannot give more. God cannot love more. If it were not for this, to look for a fuller manifestation of God and his love to man, might be admitted; but now to think or dream of such a thing, is a mark of folly.

When we consider that God is really and truly present on the altars of the Catholic Church,—that he is the guest of the Catholic heart, its life and its nourishment,—is it to be wondered at that this Church has given birth to so many heroes, saints, and martyrs, and still continues to do so? Oh, life becomes great, noble, divine, under the influence, and in the participation of so great mysteries! Is it not,

we ask, a sufficient evidence of the divinity of the Catholic faith, that it elevates the human heart to the belief, that it receives, in the sacrament of Holy Communion, Almighty God? Is not this an audacity of faith and love, which none but God himself can inspire, sustain, and perpetuate in poor, weak human hearts? In the Catholic Church, the words of the poet can be with truth repeated :—

> "Here feel as sons of God baptized,
> With hearts exalted and surprised."*

Rome gives God to man, and can man's heart ask more? Is not this the completion of all man's wants, the end of man's supreme desire?

* Goethe.

XXII.

Extreme Unction.

"'Tis not the stoic's lessons got by rote,
The pomp of words and pedant dissertations,
That can sustain thee in that hour of terror;
Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it,
But when the trial comes they stand aghast.
Hast thou consider'd what may happen after it?
How thy account may stand, and what to answer."

ROWE.

WHAT says Rome to man in the last moments of life—at the hour of death?

It is then that the Catholic Church shows indisputably that her origin is not human but divine, for she meets all the wants of the heart at that moment when all human aid fails.

Before death approaches, the Church relieves the conscience by "Sacramental Confession."

> "They in her holy ear distil
> Thoughts which the darkest bosoms fill,
> That so from this our lower air
> They thence may upward pass in prayer." *

Then the soul is strengthened with the "Holy Viaticum;"—the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the Conqueror of death.

And when death is near, she imparts for this new journey a fresh vigor, by anointing all the avenues of the soul, the senses, with "Extreme Unction." According to the injunction of the apostle, who says, "Is any sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord will lift him up, and if he be in sin, his sins shall be forgiven him." †

Thus, with a clean and free conscience, the soul strengthened in all its faculties by the presence of its Saviour, and by Holy Unction pre-

* Baptistry. † James v.

pared, as if by a coat of mail, to meet its foes, the dying man feels a blissful assurance of a happy eternity; giving a reality to the wish—

> "I would that thus, when I shall see
> The hour of death draw near to me,
> Hope, blossoming within my heart,
> May look to heaven as I depart."*

Death, that ugly monster, "with most grim and griesley visage," comes. The soul now struggles with him; its agony commences, and at this moment the priest kneels, and invokes the saints and angels who reign in heaven, especially the Queen of Heaven, the Dear Mother of our Blessed Lord:—

> "Mother of Christ! hear thou thy people's cry,
> Star of the deep, and Portal of the sky!
> Mother of Him, who thee from nothing made,
> Sinking we strive, and call to thee for aid."
> * * * * * *
>
> "Come then our advocate,
> O turn on us those pitying eyes of thine;
> And our long exile past,
> Show us at last
> Jesus, of thy pure womb the fruit divine,

* Bryant.

O Virgin Mary, Mother blest!
O sweetest, gentlest, holiest!"*

The last act of life approaches, and at this moment the priest commands the soul in the following words: "Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; and let thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in the holy Sion."

But aught that is not pure, pure as Adam, when first he came from the hands of God, in the garden of paradise, cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. If, therefore, there is aught of stain of sin on the soul, that has not been purified by sorrow and penance, it must undergo its purification before entering the realms of bliss, and the society of angels.

Once more, the Holy Church comes to the relief of the soul, in the place of purification, by its suffrages, and accompanies it by its prayers, till it is become all pure and bright, and prepared to stand before Him, who is purity, love,

* Lyra Catholica.

light itself, and to gaze upon Him, "whose face is as the sun shineth in his power." *

Thus, the Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ, the true Mother of our souls, receives the infant at its birth by Holy Baptism, yea, even before baptism, in preparing its birth by the sanctification of the marriage of its parents; and by her guidance through all the vicissitudes of life, and the helps of her holy sacraments, she leads it to the grave, and ceases not her hold upon her child beyond the grave, till she sees it safe and secure, a citizen of heaven, in its true home, in the bosom of God. She realizes the very ideal of a true and loving mother of souls.

Though the soul has reached heaven, the bond of sympathy between it and the Church is not broken; it still continues to be her child,—yea, more hers now than ever, for the triumphant Church in Heaven, the militant Church upon Earth, and the suffering Church in the place of Purification, are one, and united closely in sympathy as one body.

"Bond of strange union; when we kneel
With saints on earth, and saints on high
Bound in mysterious sympathy." †

* Apoc. v. † Cathedral.

Such are the answers of the Catholic Church to the deep wants of man's heart; and in these answers, the heart finds full satisfaction, supreme repose, and perfect bliss. And we, on our part, have no fear, that the system of religion which satisfies fully the wants of the heart, is not strong enough to stand the severest tests of the most rigid logic. For, the affections of the heart are also guides to truth, and as unerring, when pure, as the logic of the understanding.

XXIII.

External Testimony.

"Art thou afear'd
To be the same in thine own act and valor
As thou art in desire."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE foregoing description of the Church may appear to some as a mere sketch of fancy, or the fruit of an overheated imagination, having no truth, except in the brain of the writer. For such, we will let others speak, of whom no suspicion of this kind can arise in the reader's mind.

Let a gifted writer, whose only misfortune is that his will is not equal to his perception of truth, describe how the Catholic Church appears

to him, even though he is deprived of the sight of that which "is within," which, after all, constitutes her real beauty :—

"How sublime is this thought of a spiritual organization, living from age to age through wide-spread nations, with a visible manifestation on the earth in outward forms as its body, and a moral union with the hosts of the just, orderly related in the eternal world, as its mind, and the Living God as its soul. How touching to the best feeling is the love with which this mighty mother takes to its nursing care each infant generation, and by holy rites assimilates the young as they mature into itself, and transmits a purifying influence by constant inspiration through all occupations and interests. The Church, so represented, stands in the position of a perpetual mediator, for ever bringing up her children to the Lord, that he may take them in his arms and bless them. And the effects which have through eighteen centuries been wrought by this guardianship, prove how wisely adapted such ministration is to the wants of man. Truly, the Church has been a quickening centre of modern civilization, a fountain of law and art, of manners

and policy. It would not be easy to estimate how much of our actual freedom and humanity, of our cultivation and prosperity, we owe to her foresight and just acknowledgment of rights and duties. It is easy to ascribe to the cunning and love of power of priests the wonderful sovereignty which this spiritual dictator has exerted ; but it is proof of surprising superficiality, that these critics do not recognize, that only *sincere* enthusiasm and *truth*, however adulterated by errors, can give such a hold upon human will. The Christian Church has been unquestionably the most dignified institution which the earth has seen. The priesthood through all times and people has exerted an astonishing sway ; and the universality of the fact is evidence of the necessity of such spiritual organizations as the conscience of nations. All government is, by the divine authority which originates and preserves it, a theocracy. But no hierarchy has ever existed which, in the depth and extent of its influence, can be compared with the Catholic Church. Beautiful have been its abbeys in lonely solitudes, clearing the forests, smoothing the mountains, nurseries of agricultural skill amidst

the desolating wars of barbarous ages, sanctuaries for the suffering. Beautiful its learned cloisters, with students' lamps shining late in the dark night as a beacon to wandering pilgrims, to merchants with loaded trains, to homeless exiles—their silent bands of high-browed, pallid scholars, watching the form of science in the tomb of ignorance, where she lay entranced. Beautiful its peaceful armies of charity, subduing evil with works of love in the crowded alleys and dens of cities, amid the pestilences of disease and the fouler pestilence of crime, and carrying the sign of sacrifice through nations more barren of virtues than the deserts which harbored them." *

We will now introduce to the reader another, and more gifted writer, the great Goethe, and let this prince of modern literature give to us, in his own language, the impression that the Catholic Church made upon his many-sided genius.

Speaking of the need he felt of a father-confessor, or rather a spiritual director, in his youth, he adds: "I cannot on this occasion forbear re-

* W. H. Channing.

calling somewhat of my earlier youth, in order to make it clear that the great affairs of religion, as embodied in the Church, must be carried on with order and close coherence, if they are to bring forth the expected fruit. The Protestant service has too little fulness and consistency to be able to hold the common people together; hence, it easily happens that members secede from it, and either form little communities of their own, or they quietly carry on their citizen life side by side, without ecclesiastical connection. Thus, for a long time, complaints have been made that the church-goers are diminishing from year to year, and, in just the same ratio, the persons who partake of the Lord's table. As to both, but especially the latter, the cause lies very near; but who dares to speak it out? We will make the attempt.

"In moral and religious, as well as in physical and political matters, man cannot do any thing well *extempore;* he needs a sequence, from which results habit; he cannot represent to himself what he is to love and to perform, as a single or isolated act, and in order to repeat any thing willingly, it must not have become strange

to him by discontinuance. If the Protestant worship lacks fulness in general, so, when it is investigated in detail, it will be found that the Protestant has too few sacraments, that he has indeed only one in which he is himself an actor, —the Lord's Supper; for Baptism he sees only when it is performed on others, and therefore derives no benefit from it. The Sacraments are the highest in religion, the symbols to our outward sense of an extraordinary divine favor and grace. In the Lord's Supper earthly lips receive the embodiment of a Divine Being, and under the form of earthly nourishment, are partakers of a heavenly. This sense is just the same in all Christian Churches; it is now *the* Sacrament, with more or less submission in the mystery, with more or less accommodation as to what is understood to be received; it always remains a great and holy thing, which in reality takes the place of the possible or the impossible, the place of that which man can neither attain to, nor do without. But such a sacrament should not stand alone; no Christian can partake of it with the true joy for which it is given, if the symbolical or sacramental sense is not fostered

within him. He must be accustomed to regard the inner religion of the heart and that of the external Church as perfectly one, as the great universal sacrament, which again divides itself into so many others, and communicates to these parts its holiness, indestructibleness, and eternity.

"Here a youthful pair give their hands to one another, not for a passing salutation, or for the dance; the priest pronounces his blessing upon the act, and the bond is indissoluble. It is not long ere these wedded ones bring a third, made in their likeness, to the threshold of the altar; it is cleansed with consecrated water, and so incorporated into the Church that it cannot forfeit this benefit, but through the most monstrous apostasy. The child in this life practises himself in earthly things of his own accord, in heavenly things he must be instructed. Does it prove on examination that this has been fully done. He is next received into the bosom of the Church as an actual citizen, as a professor in truth, and of his own free will, not without outward tokens of the weightiness of this matter. Now is he first decidedly a Christian, now for the first time he knows his advantages, as also

his duties. But, meanwhile, many a strange thing has happened to him as a man; through instruction and affliction he has come to know how critical appears the state of his inner self, and he will yet constantly question within himself of doctrines and transgressions; but punishment shall no longer find place. For here, in the infinite confusion in which he cannot but get entangled, amidst the conflicting claims of Nature and Religion, an admirable means of information is given him, by confiding his deeds and misdeeds, his infirmities and doubts, to a worthy man, appointed expressly for that purpose, who knows how to calm, to warn, to strengthen him; to chasten him by symbolical punishments, as it were; and at last, through a complete washing away of his guilt, to bless him, and give him back the tablet of his manhood, pure and cleansed. Thus prepared beforehand, and purely calmed to rest by many sacramental acts, which, on closer examination, branch forth again into minuter sacramental traits, he kneels down to receive the host; and yet more to enhance the mystery of this high act, he sees the chalice only in the distance; it is no common meat and

drink that satisfies him, it is a heavenly feast, which makes him thirst after heavenly drink.

"Yet let not the youth believe that this is all he has to do; let not even the man believe it! In earthly relations we are accustomed at last to depend on ourselves, and, even there, knowledge, understanding, and character, will not always suffice; in heavenly things, on the contrary, we are never done learning. That higher feeling within us which, on frequent examination, finds itself not once truly at home, is even oppressed by so much from without besides, that our own power hardly administers all that is necessary for counsel, consolation, and help. But, to this end, a remedy is found to be instituted for our whole life, and an intelligent, pious man is continually on the look-out to show the right way to the wanderers, and to relieve the distressed.

"And what has now been so well tried through the whole life, shall show forth all its healing power with tenfold activity at the gate of Death. According to a trustful custom, in which he has been guided from his youth up, the dying man receives with fervor those symbolical, significant assurances, and where every earthly warranty

fails, there, by a heavenly one, he is assured of a blessed existence to all eternity. He feels himself perfectly convinced that neither a hostile element nor a malignant spirit can hinder him from clothing himself with a glorified body, so that, when in immediate relation with the Godhead, he may partake of the boundless happiness which flows forth from Him.

"In conclusion, then, in order that the whole may be made holy, the feet also are anointed and blessed. They are to feel, in case of possible recovery, an aversion to touching this earthly, hard, impenetrable soil. A wonderful nimbleness shall be imparted to them, by which they spurn from under them this hollow earth which attracted them before. And so, through a resplendent circle of equally holy acts, whose beauty we have only briefly hinted at, the cradle and the grave, let them lie perchance never so far asunder, are bound together within one never-ending round.

"But all these spiritual wonders spring not, like other fruits, from the natural soil, where they can neither be sown, nor planted, nor cherished. We must supplicate for them from another region, a thing which cannot be done by

all persons, nor at all times. Here the highest of these symbols meet us, according to ancient, pious tradition. We are told that one man may be endowed with grace, blessed and sanctified, above another. But lest this should appear as a natural gift, this great grace, bound up as it is with a heavy duty, must be communicated to others by one who has authority ; and the greatest good that a man can attain must be received and perpetuated on earth by spiritual heirship, yet without his being able to wrestle it out, or seize upon its possession, of himself. In the very ordination of the priest, every thing is comprehended which is necessary for the effectual solemnizing of these holy acts, by which the many receive grace, without any other act being needful on their part but that of faith and implicit confidence. And so the priest steps forth into the line of his predecessors and successors, into the circle of those anointed with him, representing Him, the great Source of blessings, so much the more gloriously, as it is not the priest whom we reverence, but his office ; it is not his nod to which we bow the knee, but to the blessing which he imparts, and which seems the more holy, and

to come the more immediately from heaven, inasmuch as the earthly instrument cannot at all weaken or invalidate it by its own sinful, yea, wicked nature." *

After this impressive description of the beauty and harmony that reign in the Catholic Church, Goethe casts back a glance upon that unsuccessful attempt of the sixteenth century to have Christianity independent of the Church of Christ, and exclaims :—

"How is not this truly spiritual connection shattered to pieces in Protestantism! Since some of the above-mentioned symbols are declared apocryphal, and only a few canonical; and how, by their indifference to one of these, will they prepare us for the high dignity of the other?"

* Autobiography.

XXIV.

Divine Life and Rome.

"The feelings which the heart has raised to birth,
That holy mother never will disclaim;
She is no hireling minister of earth;
They are no bastard forgers of her name."

MILNES.

SUCH are the answers of the Catholic Church to man's wants, moral and intellectual, of the heart and of the head. But one may reply: "These, after all, though intended for all men, still do not meet the wants of all, and especially of that class of souls, who would realize in daily conduct the life of Christ, in all its purity, loveliness and beauty. What says the Catholic Church to this class of souls? for we repudiate

all Christianity that does not hold up to men the life of Christ as a model, and teach the possibility of obtaining it. No, it is not enough to have found repose of mind and peace of heart ; one needs also to find his place, and the work-task he is to accomplish, according to the divine plan of God in the universe. Does Catholicity meet the special wants of this class of souls ? Does it offer to them a place, and the means and opportunity, for the fulfilment of their destiny ? "

We confess, at the outset, that our difficulty here is not to show that she does this, but to show what she does to meet these souls ; so far does her actuality surpass the boldest visions of those who, outside of her sphere, have attempted to live a divine life. Their brightest dreams are but faint and feeble copies of a life realized in her bosom for centuries, and they are not even that. But let us go to facts and things, for we cannot stop to speculate, when so vast a field of realities lies before us, surpassing our highest speculations.

From the earliest times, there have been in the Church a large class of men and women who have devoted themselves entirely to God, and conse-

crated their lives to his service, and that of their fellow-men ; souls, with all their energies bent upon living a spiritual and divine life.

The religious orders in the Catholic Church date their existence from the first Christian community mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, at that time when "the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul ; neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them . . . . . Neither was there any one needy among them, for as many as were owners of lands, or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, laid it down at the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made to every one according to his need." *

Here we have a picture of the religious community, and the religious orders of the Catholic Church profess nothing else than to be a perpetuation of this primitive community of Christians.

Shall we go on, step by step, and show how they copy most faithfully the Divine Models ? Justice requires it, for having tested Protestantism in this manner, let us put the same test to

* Acts ii.

Rome ; Rome, the seat of Antichrist ; Rome, that would crush in our souls all freedom of thought ; Rome, that would extinguish in our hearts every spark of generous, noble and divine aspiration after a pure and holy life.

What does Rome, then, say to the practice of religious obedience ?

Rome replies : "Jesus obeyed, Christians must obey—all Christians must copy their divine model, the God-Man."

But to those who would practise heroic obedience, to those who feel within them the inspiration to follow closely the footsteps of Him who was the way to life, she offers the opportunity of making their whole lives, like that of Jesus Christ, an uninterrupted act of religious obedience. She opens to such her religious orders, where, by their vows, they promise to obey, according to their holy rules, their superiors, until death. An act of sublime faith, of supreme courage ; an act which frees them by one blow from all that separates man's will from God's will—self ; an act which makes man a compositor with the angels who always do God's will ; an act which gives to every thing they do a divine

character, an eternal reward. And say not, O ye blind, that it is diminishing one's liberty to determine by a supreme act of the will to serve God alone, and never to be a slave to self; say not that it is degrading to man to submit himself to the guidance of another, of whom Jesus Christ hath said, "He that heareth you, heareth me." *

> "Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
> Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains." †

Such language betrays an ignorance of what constitutes true liberty, and the repudiation of the Christian faith. Here, then, in submission, man can find, if Mr. Carlyle and his followers did but know it, the satisfaction of what he calls "this prime want of man,—true guidance for loveful obedience."

But we know their reply:—

> "Nothing but gloom and darkness there."

We repeat the answer of the poet:—

> "Shrewd Sir Philistine sees things so,
> Well may he narrow and captious grow,
> Who all his life on the outside passes."

* Luke x. † Milton.

Yes, the darkness is on the side of those who cannot see that an act of perfect religious obedience opens to us all the avenues of divine life; that to renounce our private judgment for a divine authority, is an act, that opens to us the source and fulness of light. But they who have not been illumined by the faith, though they think themselves free, are slaves to the greatest of all tyrants—pride, and the degraded servants of the most base of all masters—self.

These men have no higher idea of freedom than independence, whereas Christians have a true idea of freedom—obedience to God;

> "Obedience, such as holds the hosts on high;
> And pure heaven-soothing order." *

For in submission to God alone, can we find an unlimited activity of all our faculties, and a full and perfect development of our whole nature.

Religious obedience in the Catholic Church is nothing else than the Divine Law reduced to practice, and reduced to practice in a complete and perfect manner. To those, therefore, who

* The Cathedral.

would gain heroic virtue, she says: "Follow Jesus Christ, the way to truth and life, by the road of perfect obedience."

It is in these monasteries and convents, the schools of heroic Christian virtue, that is found not only that obedience, which all, as Catholics, are bound to practise, to the dogmas and precepts of God, and the laws of the Church; but also the discipline to bring all the thoughts of the mind and affections of the heart into accordance with the Christian ideal—Christ's life.

Interior direction is found in these asylums. Masters of the spiritual life are found there, to whom interior life is familiar, and who can serve as guides on account of their example, as well as by their infused knowledge and acquired science. Here the soul can find a master, a guide, and a friend, to sympathize with, console, and lead it on to the heights of Christian perfection; and it is for such guides that many hearts are aching, many souls are yearning, and suffering the most painful of all deprivations.

XXV.

Poverty.

"O blissful poverty!
Nature, too partial, to thy lot assigns
Health, freedom, innocence, and downy peace,
Her real goods."

FENTON.

WHAT says the Catholic Church to those who would free themselves from all material obstacles by voluntary poverty, like that of Jesus Christ?

Love is of such a nature that it is not at rest until it has established a kind of equality between the lovers. Can one love Jesus Christ and not desire to express in his life the life of Jesus?

Who can read the words that fell from the lips of the God-man, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,"* and not be touched with sympathy and feel an impulse to be like him.

What says the Catholic Church to this? Her reply is that of a true spouse of the poor and lowly Jesus: "My child, imitate that divine model, embrace holy poverty; become poor for His sake who was rich, and became poor for love of you; do as He did, depend on that Providence that clothes the lilies of the valley, and feeds the birds of the air; you have my approbation, the confirmation of my authority, and the protection of my love and affection." Such is the language of the true Spouse of Christ. Hence there have been at all times, in her bosom, some of the Faithful who have practised the most sublime and heroic poverty, this being one of the three vows of all religious, both men and women. A type of these was St. Francis of Assisi, who, after hearing the priest read the Gospel, "Go, sell whatsoever

* Matt. viii.

thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come, follow me;" * immediately gave away all the money he had, whereupon his father being displeased with him, brought him to the Bishop's palace, and St. Francis, in the presence of the Bishop, stripped himself of his dress, and gave that also to his father, and the Bishop having thrown a garment about him, he exclaimed in an ecstasy of joy: "Listen and understand: until now, I have called Peter Bernardone my father; henceforth, I can say boldly, Our Father, who art in heaven, in whom I have placed my treasure, my faith, and my hope." So enraptured was he with poverty, that he never ventured to mention it, except by the title of "holy" poverty, or his "Lady," his "noble" or his "dearest Lady." He always wore a coarse peasant's garb, lived upon common fare, and would accept nothing for his own. In a short period he had a multitude of disciples, and in a chapter, called ten years after the order was established, there were present more than five

* Matt. x.

thousand who had embraced St. Francis's holy rule of poverty.

And later, St. Cajetan established an order of religious men who literally trusted in Divine Providence like the birds of the air ; for not only were they forbidden to hold any property, either in private or in common, like the Franciscans, but they were not even allowed to beg, and had to depend entirely upon the voluntary contributions of the faithful ; neither were they allowed to keep, in their convent, provisions for the next day. Thus have these men followed Jesus in poverty, and thus thousands and thousands of religious men and women still persevere in following him, and will do so to the end of time.

In spite of all this, there are men who profess to be the true followers of Jesus, the preachers of that Gospel which teaches poverty, who would have us believe that the practice of this virtue, as Jesus practised it, is absurd, visionary, impossible. What does this prove ? It proves either that Jesus Christ was a fanatic and visionary, or that they are false teachers of the Gospel, blind leaders of the blind. What

does it prove? It proves that when movements are made among them to realize this sublime virtue, in spite of their influence and their opposition, men will soon learn to see that Popery, after all, is Christianity, that they have been grossly imposed upon, and be led to say:

"And now within Thy calm and holy grove
I fain would hasten on the road of Heaven;
Guide me to haunts of lowly penury,
That I may cast aside my worldly wealth,
And gird my loins with holier hope." *

* Baptistry.

XXVI.

Chastity.

"O that the vacant eye would learn to look
On very beauty, and the heart embrace
True loveliness."

HOOD.

WHAT says the Catholic Church to the most sublime and angelic virtue of chastity?

Her answer is clear and explicit: "Virginity is the queen of all virtues, and most pleasing to Him who lived and died a virgin—Jesus Christ."

"O that the young soul took
Its virgin passion from the glorious face
Of fair religion, and addressed its strife
To win the riches of eternal life!"*

* Hood.

Such is her language. But he who does not know what it is to have his whole soul turned heavenward, and feels not the love of "the Immortal Bridegroom who binds the soul with more than bridal ties," knows not what this virtue is. He cannot understand how a chaste life is possible.

Grace is a pure and divine excitement, tending to draw and unite the soul to God, and when once it has penetrated the roots of man's passions, and gained the mastery of his affections, it withdraws him from all sensual and human pleasure to find the purest and highest source of love and bliss in God. Hence, it finds the purest of all delights in the abnegation of sensual enjoyments and material pleasures. There are souls who have felt this, even among those who are ignorant of the true faith,—one writer beautifully says: "Happy, inexpressibly happy, is the will that gives itself as a chaste bride to the Eternal." Even Milton, whom one would least suspect of extolling chastity, after his advocation of the dissolution of the marriage tie, says:

"So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liv'ried angels lackey her,

Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
And in clear stream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants,
Begins to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unspotted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal." *

And a writer of note of our own day tells us in one of our journals, that "we shall not decline celibacy as the great fact of the time." †

Do you wish to know from whence springs that spiritual might by which men like St. Bernard, when called from his solitude by the Sovereign Pontiff of the Church, made the whole earth tremble with his voice, and enkindled in the hearts of men, for succeeding generations, the fire of divine love? It was from chastity. —"Thy heart has been strengthened because thou hast loved chastity." ‡ Would you wish to know from whence springs the devotion of the Catholic priesthood in times of great calamities and epidemics, their fearlessness in attending the sick bed of the poorest and humblest

* Comus. † Margaret Fuller. ‡ Judith xv.

at a moment's warning, and at the risk of contagion? It springs from the chaste soul, where burns uninterruptedly that fire which Christ came on earth to kindle, the fire of divine love.

It would be useless, at this day, to attempt to show that a priesthood, unconsecrated by the vow of chastity, would be no priesthood at all; that soon it would degenerate into the common and ordinary life, not respected, and unable to demand respect.

But not only do we speak of the priesthood when we speak of this virtue, but we must speak of the thousand and ten thousand virgins, of both sexes, devoted to God and the good of their fellow-men,

> "Who angel-wise have chosen
> And [illegible]ke Paul, a virgin course, content
> [illegible]o go where Jesus went." *

As the Brothers of St. John of God, Christian Brothers, Sisters of Charity, of Mercy, &c., who never would or could be so without this holy vow; for this exempts them from the yoke

* Lyra Apos.

and burdens of matrimony. They have no spouse to please but God, no children to take care of but humanity ;—oh ! is this not a noble destiny, to give one's virgin strength to heaven and to gentle deeds of love ! Let one of our great modern reformers have as much devotion for his world-happiness schemes, as a simple Sister of Charity, and we should then have some fear of his success.

Oh, is not this a great religion which inspires the timid maiden with the boldness to pretend to have God alone for her spouse, and all humanity for her sympathies ! Such is the nobility of the soul when inspired by Catholic faith, and true to her vocation she says : "No love will serve that is not eternal, and as large as the universe." Here is woman's dignity, and as a modern thinker has said, "No married woman can represent the female world, for she belongs to her husband. The idea of woman must be represented by a Virgin."

Deprived, as many are, of the graces and the spiritual strength imparted through the channels of the sacraments, we are not surprised that they cannot understand how one can practise

such heroic virtue; nor can we, for the same reason, blame them that they are likewise unable to conceive the possibility of rejecting the basis and limits of common life, and gaining a permanent and divine basis of action. But this has been done. How can they refuse to believe in the fact that the greatest saints have professed such a life; a Vincent de Paul, a De Sales, a Francis, a Bernard, a Gregory, an Augustine, an Ambrose, a Jerome; and that the precursor of our Lord, his blessed Mother, and He himself, have practised this virtue, and what is more, have encouraged others to do so too, this is what surprises us! Yes, it is in the bosom of the Catholic Church alone, that the bright dreams of youth, of love, of purity, and of Christian holiness of life, can find their realization. It is from thee, O holy Church we

"Learn virgin innocence, learn mercy mild,
Unlearn ambition, unlearn carefulness.
O life, where state of angels is fulfilled,
And saints, who little have, and need still less;
A state which nothing hath, yet all things doth possess!"*

* Baptistry.

XXVII.

Mortification.

"The women of old Rome were satisfied
With water for their beverage. Daniel fed
On pulse, and wisdom gain'd. The primal age
Was beautiful as gold, and hunger then
Made acorns tasteful; thirst, each rivulet
Run nectar. Honey and locusts were the food,
Whereof the Baptist in the wilderness
Fed, and that eminence of glory reach'd,
That greatness, which the Evangelist records."

DANTE.

WHAT says the Catholic Church to self-denial and mortification?

In this, as in all other things, she is a perfect copy of Him who was the example of a perfect life. All her children must do penance, abstain, and fast Every year she imitates the

forty days' fast of our Lord in the desert, by the season of Lent. Every Friday is a day of abstinence in remembrance of the sufferings of Christ for us, on that day. At each of the four seasons of the year, she has three days of fast to draw down God's blessing upon nature, and avert the curse brought on it by self-indulgence; in one word, the daily life of a Catholic is, if rightly considered, one of abstinence and self-denial; for Jesus Christ said, not to religious alone, but to all: "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* This is the common life of a faithful Catholic; and now what shall we say of those who, by a special grace, practise mortification in an heroic degree in her schools of virtue and discipline—the monasteries and convents? Shall we attempt to defend this demand of the heart for ascetic life? But this is not our purpose here. We are bound only to show that the Catholic Church meets this want. Look only on Jesus Christ; and if we are not willing to suffer with him, we have no heart, or no room for him in it.

* Mark viii.

"To Calvary's awful mount thy cross to bear,
After Thee, and with Thee, and share Thy load;—
Divine Prerogative!" *

But the fact that the Catholic Church meets these wants is so palpable, that it needs no proofs; we are only put on our defence.

There are men from whom we should look for better things, who are still bound by such low and human views of life, that they cannot conceive of the philosophy of asceticism, and totally misapprehend its purpose. They tell us: "Asceticism looks very stupid by the side of earnest charity," and that "we must put away asceticism;" and why?—"Because the Religion of the Present calls us to work for Universal Restoration, Universal Reconciliation, the At-One-Ment of God and Man and Nature." † Now, we opine that Jesus Christ knew better than any votaries of Fourierism the wants of man's nature, and the means, too, of bringing man to his true destiny. To put the language of these gentlemen into plain English, is to say: "Away with the cross—the crucified One. His example

* Baptistry. † W. H. Channing.

is not needed for this age ; the religion of the nineteenth century teaches us to obey our instincts, to seek pleasure, to act out and gratify ourselves. We need not be told to deny ourselves, we do not want to hear of the cross, nor behold that crucifix, which reminds us of suffering and pain."

If asceticism looks very stupid by the side of earnest charity, we would beg these gentlemen to point out to us, if even in rare cases,—indeed, if even in one case,—they have found earnest charity, except by the side of asceticism ? They certainly will not deny the *earnest charity* of the different religious orders in the Catholic Church ; her missionaries, her brotherhoods, for the conversion of the heathen, the care of schools, for the sick and insane, &c. ; or the *earnest charity* of the Sisters of Charity, Mercy, the Good Shepherd, Visitation, &c. This fact they cannot deny ; and it is strange that they have never been struck with it, and surmised that there might be some secret connection between "asceticism" and "*earnest charity.*"

But the reason given for putting away asceticism, namely, "because the religion of the

present calls us to work for Universal Restoration, Universal Reconciliation, At-One-Ment of God and Man and Nature," evinces such a total darkness on this subject, that it is evident those who offer it are blinded by some gross error. Pray, then, what did the religion of the past —we allow the distinction to be made between the past and present to please these persons— what did the religion of the past call men to work for, if it was not for this very thing? And how was it accomplished? Precisely by ascetic discipline.

> "And they, I ween, who sleep below
> Had more of wisdom than we know;
> With alms and prayers and penitence,
> They sternly conquer'd things of sense." *

The end to be gained is union—union with God. But God is pure, is purity itself; man is impure,—hence, the need of purification. Again, God is unity—One; man is degraded and distracted,—hence, the need of his being rectified and detached from all exterior objects. What

* Baptistry.

else has asceticism for its object than the purifying and rectifying the passions and powers of the soul, in order to prepare it for union with God ?

We have heard of persons wishing for the end, without being willing to use the means to gain the end. This is, indeed, folly ; but the height of folly and absurdity is, to wish for the end, and to deny and repudiate the means to attain it. Do not these men know that the souls which have obtained the highest degree of union with God, are precisely those who practised in the highest degree the asceticism which they condemn ?

> "Faith alone can interpret life, and the heart
> That aches and bleeds with the stigma
> Of pain, alone bears the likeness of Christ,
> And can comprehend its dark enigma."*

But it is not for ourselves alone that we are called to work,—it is for "*Universal Restoration.*" Grant it, and permit us to ask, if it is not selfishness that limits and binds man's activity ? And hence, the sources of life, and

* Longfellow.

the key to its secrets, lie, not in the indulgence of self, but in the denial of self; in mortification and prayer. Penance increases, intensifies, and centralizes man's power; and it will be found that those who have been most active in man's restoration, were men who made the sensual appetite subservient to the loftier soul, by heroic penance. A St. Gregory, who had the whole government of the world on his shoulders, at the most critical period of the progress of society; a St. Bernard, who was more powerful than kings, who adjusted their quarrels, and awoke all Europe to the defence of Christianity against the Turks; and, in a word, her several orders of religious men and women. "'Tis suffering that worketh might."

But we go farther, and say, that asceticism is a pressing need of the heart. It was an exquisitely painful reality within them that drove men to great, and even frightful austerities. For instance, the Trappists; who one half of the year allow themselves but two meals a day, and the other half, but one repast, which they take at half past two, P. M., except during Lent, and then at four. Their fare consists principally of

a thin soup made of peas, or a dish of beans seasoned with salt, and moistened with water. A pear for each, or a small quantity of some other fruit, forms their dessert. The Trappist knows neither meat, fish, butter, nor eggs. He rises every morning at two o'clock, on Sundays at one, and on great festivals at midnight; prayer and manual labor occupy all his hours until eight o'clock in the evening, the hour of retiring to rest. The Trappist eats less, and labors more, than the workmen of our cities, or the inhabitants of our country districts; and he does this voluntarily, for the love of God and his neighbor. What is this but saying that he is more a man than other men?

"Thus bravely live heroic men,
A consecrated band;
Life is to them a battle-field,
Their hearts a holy land."*

By such as these the germ of power was fed and strengthened, which afterwards showed itself in the practice of supernatural virtues, in uninter-

* Tuckerman.

rupted acts of heroism, in splendid miracles, and in a prodigious activity. On reading the lives of the saints, we find that those to whom God has given the greatest and most miraculous gifts, were just those who practised the greatest austerities, and the most perfect poverty, thus giving to their lives the broad seal of his approbation. These are no mere assertions, but facts. Read the lives of St. Bernard, St. Dominic, the three St. Francises—of Assisi, De Paul and Xavier; they surpass all imagination; and know it, too, that he who has something to say, or to do, in his age, will be led irresistibly into solitude, and to the practice of self-denial.

When the soul feels an intense desire for union with God, not a sentimental and puerile, or merely poetic affection or affectation, it cannot but practise penance; that is, remove the hindrances to its union with God. Divine love, when once it has taken its root in the heart, cannot suffer any obstruction; it consumes all other affections, cuts off all ties, and turns all the currents of our being to God. For with a distracted attention, the soul can never attain a perfect union with God. Hence arises a most perfect

asceticism; for no creature, no material thing, no image, no thought, or affection, can give us an adequate idea of God, or be an adequate means of union with God. Nothing created, however good, true or beautiful, can unite the soul to the uncreated good, the true, the beautiful. Before the soul, therefore, can be wholly united to God, it must recall its energies from all created objects to its centre, and there, by an act of perfect love, lose itself in God. This is the secret of the doctrine of self-denial, mortification, abstinence, &c.

And it is in these monasteries, under wise and experienced masters of the spiritual life, in silence and solitude, that the discipline of asceticism is practised, and the restoration of man, and his reconciliation and union with God, is effected. Out of these schools of Christian virtue go forth the apostles of nations, the regenerators of society, and the heroes and martyrs of faith and love.

"Thrice happy they, who earthly stores have sold,
Dearer sublunar joys, domestic ties,
And form themselves into one holy fold
To imitate on earth the happy skies,

With vigil, prayer, and sacred litanies;
Their souls to Heavenly contemplation given,
While earthly hope within them buried lies,
Their sole employ to purge the evil leaven,
And render their cleans'd souls a fit abode for Heaven." *

* Baptistry.

XXVIII.

Nature and the Church.

"All natural objects have
An echo in the heart. And maintain
With the mysterious mind and breathing mould
A co-existence and community. This flesh doth thrill,
And has connection by some unseen chain
With its original source and kindred substance."

A. Hunt.

NATURE must also find reunion with God through man; but what is asceticism, say the advocates of these world-schemes of pleasure, but the denial, repudiation, and contempt of nature? This piece of information is, of course, in keeping with the rest.

Uninstructed in the knowledge of the divine order of things, these men see not that the an-

tagonism they imagine between Christian asceticism and nature, exists only in their own minds.

Man is the high-priest and king of nature, and in him are concealed all the signets of her life. She suffered by man's fall :—

> "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe." *

She must also profit by his restoration. "For we know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain, even till now. Because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the children of God." † Therefore there can be no union with God in which nature has not her share. This is seen in the lives of the Catholic saints, every one of whom were masters of asceticism. From the earliest ages we read of the power of the hermit Fathers over nature, and of their familiarity with her. St. Athanasius remarks, in the life of St. Anthony, that wild animals causing great damage in a field which he cultivated, he took one gently, and said to

* Milton. † Rom. viii.

all the others, while speaking to the one he had caught, "Why do you injure me, who never did you any harm? Go, and in the name of the Lord, never come here any more." The holy doctor adds, that from that time they were never again seen there, as if they had been afraid of disobeying him.

The lives of those men who peopled the deserts and were companions of the birds and beasts of the forests are filled with facts regarding the exercise of their powers over nature. St. Francis was on the friendliest terms with all creatures. Once when the people would not hear him preach, he preached to the swallows, and they opened their beaks and clapped their wings for joy. And on returning to his companions he reproached himself, for not having preached before to the little birds which heard with so much respect the word of God. One day, as he was about to take his collation with brother Leo, he felt himself interiorly consoled on hearing a nightingale sing. He begged Leo to sing the praises of God alternately with the bird; the latter having excused himself, alleging the badness of his voice, he himself responded to the bird, and continued to

do so till night, when he was obliged to give over, acknowledging that the little bird had beaten him. He made it come upon his hand, and praised it for having sung so well, fed it, and it was only after he had desired it to leave him, and given it his blessing, that the nightingale flew away.

On the banks of the lake of Rieti, a large fish which had been just caught, was presented to him, he held it for some time in his hand, and then put it back in the water. The fish remained in the same place, playing in the water before him, as if out of regard for him it could not leave him, and did not disappear till it had received the Saint's leave, together with his blessing.

In a word, St. Francis and nature understood each other most perfectly. He was on such familiar terms with her that he called the birds, the beasts, the elements by the name of brother and sister. He composed a Psalm in the manner of the Benedicite to give to her inarticulate worship an intellectual sign. The Franciscan chronicles are filled with the most charming anecdotes of the reverent and familiar under-

standing that existed between nature and the saints of this order, which was effected by their great simplicity, humility and love of poverty.

Let us cite another example, one from the life of the Blessed Henry Suso, of the order of St. Dominic, who practised unheard of austerities, and who stands at the head of the ascetic writers of Germany of the fourteenth century.

"It is impossible to describe," so says his cotemporary biographer," the sensible devotion with which Blessed Henry was accustomed to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the divine fire of love with which his soul was inflamed, especially when reciting these words of the preface: 'SURSUM CORDA!' 'GRATIAS AGAMUS DOMINO DEO NOSTRO!' 'Lift up your hearts!' 'Let us render thanks to the Lord our God.' Once he fell into an ecstasy on these words, and under the influence of this extraordinary grace, pronounced them with so much ardor, that his assistants perceived the state he was in, and asked him what were the thoughts with which his mind was at that moment occupied. The saint replied: 'There are three thoughts which in a special manner agitate and inflame my heart;

sometimes one after the other, and at other times all at once.'

"'In the first place I contemplate in spirit my own entire being, my soul, my body, my powers and faculties; and around me I behold all the creatures with which the Almighty has peopled heaven, earth and the elements; the angels of heaven, the beasts of the forest, the inhabitants of the waters, the plants of the earth, the sand of the sea, the atoms which float on the air, in the beams of the sun, the flakes of the snow, the drops of rain, and the pearls of dew. I reflect that all creatures, that all creatures even to the remotest extremities of the world obey God, and contribute as much as they can to that mysterious harmony which rises up unceasingly to praise and bless the Creator. I imagine myself, then, in the midst of this concert, like the director of a choir, and I apply all my faculties to beat the tune for the music. I invite, I excite by the most lively sentiments of my heart, the deepest emotions of my soul to chant joyously with me, 'SURSUM CORDA! HABEMUS AD DOMINUM. GRATIAS AGAMUS DOMINO DEO NOSTRO!' Lift up your hearts! We have lifted them up to

the Lord. Let us render thanks to the Lord our God.'"

Such is the part that nature plays in Catholic devotion, and especially in that of Catholic Saints. Let us give one more instance of this kind, and one still more striking. Of St. Rose of Lima, her biographer relates, that when she entered the garden, all the plants, flowers, and trees would be in motion; and to show that they understood the love which inflamed her heart, they entwined around each other in fond embrace, and, in order that she might satisfy her devotion in decorating the altars of the Church, flowers would bloom for her at any and at all seasons of the year. In the evening she opened her windows, to let all the insects into her cell for shelter, for they never gave her any annoyance; and in the morning, she would let them forth again. Such was the power of the Saints over nature. There existed no longer any hostility between them and the world, because they had overcome sin, and restored their souls to their original purity. They were at peace with the animal kingdom and the elements, as well as with men and themselves. In a word, all that

the poets sing of the fabled power of Orpheus and Amphion of old, has its fulfilment in the lives of the Catholic Saints. They were the true friends of nature, her deliverers, her interpreters, —her kings and priests; and God, man, and nature were one in them, as in Adam in paradise before the curse.

This is the asceticism that the Catholic Church teaches; and why should she not, when all nature contributes to her most sacred functions, and takes an essential part in her worship? Nature contributes stone for her temples, for her altars, for the images of her Saints, the Queen of Heaven, and her Divine Founder and Spouse; the choicest metals and gems for her sacred vessels; gums and sweet smelling woods for her incense; linen and silk for her vestments; wax for her lights; and flowers, nature's sweetest and choicest gifts, to decorate her altars. Nature furnishes her gifts for still more sacred purposes; —water and salt for "Holy Baptism," oils for "Extreme Unction" and "Ordination;" the earth supplies her with wheat, and the juice of the vine, for the most sacred of all purposes, to become the Body and Blood of her Lord. Thus,

"The gems in Ocean's breast, and living spars
Deep hid in Earth's dark bowels far below,
Do pave her wondrous pathway to the stars." *

Unlike that faith, which shuts out from participation in her worship, nature, art and man, so far as he is a part of nature, the Catholic Church "casts all things in beauty's mould;" and in putting them to her most sacred uses, she gives to nature a divine direction.

It is through the medium of the Catholic Church that nature speaks to its God, and worships its Creator.

Oh, had nature the independent faculty of expressing herself, how would she praise that religion, which, so far from excluding her from its temples, gives her an indispensable part in all its worship, and makes her, by its Holy Sacraments, the medium of heavenly influences, and the channel of divine graces!

What we fear is, that those who oppose Catholic asceticism, never had even a faint conception of Catholicity, or knew what it is to live an interior life. They have not even learned its

* Baptistry.

alphabet. Whatever they may say, whatever their language may seem to express, they have no other basis of life than human affection. In the last analysis, they fall back upon flesh and blood. They do not know that to live to God alone in the condition of our fallen nature, self-denial and mortification are not a mere matter of choice, but an absolute and constant necessity; they do not know that the greater the peace that is to be gained for the soul, the greater must be the combats to which it is delivered; that the most severe and excessive pains open the way to the highest knowledge, and the purest joy.

> "Dearly bought the hidden treasure
> Finer feelings can bestow,
> Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
> Thrill the deepest notes of woe." *

When God would prepare a soul for an extraordinary activity, he leads it into solitude, reduces it to silence, and speaks to the heart. St. Bernard acknowledged that he learned more in the woods than in books: "The trees and

* Burns.

rocks," he says, "will teach thee what professors cannot. Do you think that you cannot suck honey from the rocks, and draw oil from the flint-stones? Do not the mountains distil sweetness, the hills flow with milk and honey, and the valleys abound with rich harvests?" Such was the language of this great saint; and when St. Bonaventura was asked what books he read that taught him how to write with so much wisdom and unction, he pointed to his crucifix, the feet of which were all smooth from the abundance of kisses he had bestowed on them. This was the source of his seraphic eloquence. The great angelic doctor, St. Thomas, confesses, "that whatever he might know, he did not obtain it so much by his studies and labors, as from the divine bounty;" and it is well known that he often solved the most difficult problems in philosophy and theology when elevated many yards into the air by the ardor of his devotion before the Blessed Sacrament. The Bernards, the Bonaventuras, and Thomases of these times, need a place for their life. Such souls as these —and there are many such among us—need solitude and freedom from common cares and solici-

tudes. Without solitude, deep silence, and mortification, the delicate sources of the inmost life will never be opened, and brought to light and maturity.

To such souls as are so happily constituted that they feel compelled to obey the command of our Lord, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you;" * to those who would follow in the footsteps of their Divine Master, and are bold enough to trust his promise, that in leaving father and mother, and all for his sake, they shall receive an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting; to those who

> "will not life support
> By earth and its base metals, but by love,
> Wisdom and virtue," †

the Catholic Church opens her religious orders, her monasteries, and convents. In these blessed abodes each will find all he ever sought, and more than he ever anticipated, or hoped. He will exclaim at the first glance:

* Matt. vi. † Dante.

"Behold the dreams of my youth! Oh, did I ever anticipate that it would be possible for me to see this day, to have this privilege! Did I ever believe that such a life was possible upon the earth! Behold the path lies open before me, which I have yearned for so long! I am free; all that I can desire is here, a roof to shelter me, a cell where I can be alone; my bodily wants provided for. Here I have leisure to read, to study, meditate, and pray; here I have a guide and friend, brother and father, in my spiritual director; companions with me in the same holy aims; and all that is demanded of me is to be true to these aims, and the hopes that God has awakened in my bosom! How changed is all! Instead of opposition, discouragement, and contempt, I have sympathy, friendship, and love. Here I am told that my hopes are the inspirations of God, that my bright dreams of a pure and holy life, were divine favors. What a change! These things seemed once a dream, but they are not. Can I believe it? All my wishes are realized. Here for the first time, and with open heart, I taste pure joy, and can say:—

'Breathe now; and let the hunger be appeased,
That with great craving long hath held my soul,
Finding no food on earth.'" *

Such is the language of those who enter upon a religious life in the bosom of the Catholic Church; and what is this but the fulfilment of the promise of Christ, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." "He that leaveth house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, shall receive an hundred fold now in this time; and in the world to come life everlasting." †

"Our world
Hath need of such as thee and thy fair nuns,
And these good fathers of the monastery,
To teach youth, tend the poor, the sick, the sad,
Relume the extinguish'd lights of ancient lore,
Making each little cell a glorious lantern,
To beam forth truth o'er our benighted age." ‡

* Dante. † Mark x. ‡ Darley.

XXIX.

Exhortation.

"Make a right dedication
Of all thy strength, to keep
From swelling that so ample heap
Of lives abused, and virtue given for naught."

W. E. Channing.

IT is thus that the Catholic Church opens her arms to those chosen souls who would dedicate themselves entire to the fulfilment of their high, noble, and divine destiny. She regards them as her brightest ornaments, and the most precious jewels of her crown.

The object of her religious orders is no other than to remove all obstacles to the fulfilment of our destiny, and to furnish us with all, and the

most speedy means to attain it. Duty and pleasure thus become one ; and this is paradise, so far as paradise can exist, in the present state of things.

"Blest are they, whom grace
Doth so illumine, that appetite in them
Exhaleth no inordinate desire,
Still hungering as the rule of temperance wills." *

What was attempted by those engaged in such movements as Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and other places of a similar character, the religious orders in the Catholic Church have always realized. Their most brilliant dreams do not present a fair picture of a religious life in the Catholic Church. Their hopes and highest aims were but glimmerings of the reality existing in her bosom, and that for ages. It is a happy moment, indeed, when we find that the inmost sentiments of our hearts, the lovely dreams of our youth, the desire of our manhood for self-sacrifice and heroism, are not only understood, but fully appreciated, and all the means to their fulfilment are offered to us in

* Dante.

abundance. Happy are they who find out in their youth what all men discover at some period of life, that God, and God alone, can satisfy the inmost wants of the soul, and consecrate themselves to his service with all the freshness and purity of their youthful energy. This is the most beautiful experiment in life, to pass from the service of the world to that of God !—to give one's youth to heaven !

To those who seek for true greatness, and a permanent basis for action, a divine basis for life,—a basis that will give to the intellect ever brighter visions of truth, to the heart irresistible impulses to love and heroism, and to the arm an unfailing strength ; a life that will render them independent of all ties of kindred and friendship, and make them conquerors of the world, and masters of themselves ; it is here, in these schools of religious discipline, they will find it, and all the means to make such a life their own. Out of these schools came the Jeromes, Augustines, Gregories, Bernards, Franciscs, the Vincent de Pauls, the Xaviers, and other great doctors and missionaries of the Church. Yes, the Catholic Church is the mother

of great men, the nurse of heroes, and of an unfailing succession of saints and martyrs. It is the very nature of the Catholic faith when it takes root in the heart to make men superior to nature, and true heroes.

Men talk of greatness and of heroism, but in the Church there is a perennial source of great men and heroes. There is no other.

Thomas Carlyle has talked of heroism and sham to satiety; and, like the fable of the ancients, he has gazed so long upon a sham hero, that at length he has finished by giving life to one in his own person. For the veriest of all shams is one who has talked till he has nothing more to say, and yet continues to talk "an infinite deal of nothing."

> "A tirade
> About fire-horses, jotuns, wind-bags, owls,
> Choctaws and horse-hair, shams and flunkeyism,
> Unwisdoms, Tithes, and Unveracities."

Mr. Emerson, like his colleague, has done his work, and talked out.

The work Mr. Emerson had to do, he has done, and done with a certain degree of earnest-

ness, fidelity, and even bravery. His task was to break through, and shake off the false and narrow dogmas, the hollow forms, and the hollower cant of Protestantism; and, once more, to take a stand upon man's simple nature.

In accomplishing this task, Mr. Emerson has done some service to truth, though it be a negative one. Truth may be gained by those who do not fully possess it, in two ways. First, by holding fast those fragments of revealed truth which they are in possession of, and in following them out to their relations with other truths, till they discover the whole, or the central source of them all; and in this way the school of Dr. Newman came to the knowledge of the Catholic Church. Or, secondly, by renouncing all revealed truths, and placing one's self once more upon our native instincts and capacities, which will teach us by their wants, if we be not false, the necessity of the Catholic Church.

The latter course was that of Mr. Emerson. So far as the going back to nature is concerned, Mr. Emerson did it for himself, and helped many others to the same end. Hence, the maxims that are every where scattered about,

and inculcated in his first writings, as, "obey thy instincts," "act out thyself," "be thyself," &c. But here his work stops. He has no future; no aims but false ones.

He says to man, "Obey thy instincts." Now if man were a bee, a cat, or a pig, this would answer quite well. But it is a large error to give as a rule of life to man, who has reason and free will, what is good and proper only for a beast. This is servility in its lowest form.

Even when Mr. Emerson acknowledges reason and free-will, he acknowledges them, as the Fourierites, in subordination to what he calls instinct. Reason is man's guide, and he has capacity for a still higher guidance; but this Mr. Emerson, with all rationalists, ignores.

"Can man, no more than beast, aspire
To know his being's awful Sire?
And, born and lost on Nature's breast,
No blessing seek but there to rest?

"Not this our doom, thou God benign!
Whose rays on us unclouded shine:
Thy breath sustains yon fiery dome;
But man is most thy favor'd home." *

* Sterling.

But Mr. Emerson would answer man's wants by "self-culture." All that self-culture can do for man is to make him feel more keenly and painfully his wants and deficiencies, but it can do nothing to satisfy or supply them. This is openly and sadly confessed by one of the celebrities of the school of Transcendentalists—Margaret Fuller. One of her biographers says, that "Margaret's life had an aim;" and adds, "This, after all, is the test question." Now, what was this aim? Here it is; he gives it in her own words, in *italics*: "Early I knew," she writes, "that the only object in life is to grow."

A great aim that! A melon, a pumpkin, or a squash, could say the same, if they could only speak. If the good man only knew it, this is no aim at all. This votary of self-culture proclaims it in her own words, and that at a moment when there was a field opened to her to speak, if she had any thing to say, in the columns of a periodical. "But, in truth," she confesses, "I have not much to say, for since I had leisure to look at myself, I find that so far from being an original genius, I have not yet learned to think to any depth, and that the ut-

most I have done in life has been to form my character to a certain degree of consistency, cultivate my tastes, and learn to tell the truth with a little better grace than I did at first." A confession not unlike that which Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust :—

"I feel it, I have heaped upon my brain
The gather'd treasures of man's thought in vain,
And when at length from studious toil I rest,
No power, no love, springs up within my breast,
A hair's breadth is not added to my height
I am no more the infinite."

That this self-culture, to which she devoted so many years, can give no peace to the heart, nor answer any of its wants, nor furnish any aim in life, the next writer in her biography shows. "The very restlessness of Margaret's intellect," he says, "was the confession that her heart had found no home." Listen how aimless self-culture leaves the soul. "What a heaven"—it is Margaret who speaks—"it must be to have the happiness of accomplishing something, and to feel the glow of action without exhausted weariness! Surely the race would have worn itself out by corrosion, if men in all ages had suffered

as we now do from the consciousness of an unattained Ideal." Thus, self-culture, while it renders man a little more accomplished, utterly fails to supply his wants; on the contrary, it only adds to man's misery, by making him more painfully conscious of his wants.

Still, this is all that Mr. Emerson has to offer to the youth of our land. Man's destiny to him is a riddle, and the future is wrapped up in darkness. When he attempts to utter a word of hope, it is but the echo of a flat Pantheism.

Mr. Emerson has accomplished his task, in clearing the ground from all rubbish, and now the time has come when the seeds of truth should be planted. The tide of life must be turned from a fruitless negation to a fruitful affirmation. Mr. Emerson's maxims must be converted. Substitute humility to obey, for "self-reliance;"—courage to believe, for "trust thyself;"—deny thyself, for "act out thyself;" —master thy instincts, for "obey thy instincts;" —self-sacrifice, for "self-culture;"—surrender thyself to God, for "be thyself." For the end of man is not in himself, nor in his instincts, nor in his soul, but in God. All greatness lies in the direction of God.

Some of this class of men have the strength to repel the appeals of truth ; these we do not envy: others have a certain kind of sanctity, which is, if it be permitted to speak so, diabolical, which the enemy of mankind employs to draw souls into error, and to fasten them there. And not a few plume themselves on not feeling the wants of their truer nature ; these are like the incurable patient, who rejoices at the cessation of pain, because he is ignorant of the fact, that he has ceased to feel ; and the hope and satisfaction that beam on his countenance augment a hundred fold the grief of his surrounding friends, who are aware of his condition.

To those who look for true greatness, for genuine heroism, we hold up the God-Man, Jesus Christ, as the example, the source and end of all strivings, the crown of our humanity, and the final scope of all our energies.

" From his sweet lute flow forth
Immortal harmonies, of power to still
All passions born of earth,
And draw the ardent will,
Its destiny of goodness to fulfil." *

* From the Spanish, by Bryant.

The greatest man and hero is he who is the truest and most perfect Christian.

Talk of heroism and the worship of heroism! What are the vaunted heroes of the world compared with the heroes of Christianity, whose lives were one uninterrupted stream of heroic actions? What hero of ancient or modern times can compare with a St. Francis of Assisi? a St. Francis Xavier? or Borié, the recent martyr in Cochin China? Not one.

What is your worship of heroism compared with the boldness of the Catholic Church? It is mockery. She places these heroic children of her bosom upon her altars, and there points them out to more than two hundred millions of her faithful, as their friends to be loved, their models to be imitated, and their intercessors to be invoked! What is all your talk, compared with this religious enthusiasm and love for these God-like men burning in so many pious hearts of all nations, and conditions in life, from the lisping babe, the tender maiden, the generous youth, to the gray-headed old man? How mean and shallow does the sham appear in the presence of the living reality!

We do not, however, yield up all our hopes for this class of men; at least, for some of them.

Their independent spirit and indifference to all human respect, the generous efforts and sacrifices which they have made to realize their aspirations, excite our admiration, win our love, and command our respect. Though unsuccessful, still all aspiration after a purer and better life is not extinct in their bosoms. They still feel;—they feel wants which have never been met and satisfied. We see before us these men, gifted, brave, and in earnest; more ready to obey truth, though it should cost their self-love somewhat, than to yield to what they know to be false. Oh, could we say a word that would reach their hearts, we should be all too happy!

Once we were their companion and bosom friend;—but we are changed. Changed, not in our aspirations, not in our heart's affections, not in our purposes in life;—no, these are not changed, but exalted, purified, and enlarged! Our change was this; to pass from a natural to a supernatural basis of life, thus giving to our nature a new and extraordinary participation in the Divine Nature, and bringing up our being

to the archetype of man, existing in the Divine Mind. For Jesus Christ did not come down from heaven to contradict or destroy man's nature, but to rectify and restore it, and to give to man a new, superior, divine mode of life and activity. Jesus Christ became man in order to enrich men with the gift of his own Divinity.

This was our change, and it was one of the happiest moments of our life, when we discovered for the first time, that it was not required of us, either to abandon our reason, or drown it in a false excitement of feeling, to be a religious man. That to become Catholic, so far from being contrary to reason, was a supreme act of reason. It was a joy to us, to find that instead of being required to play the whining hypocrite, or the blind fanatic, and thus renounce our manhood in order to become a Christian, we were called upon to make an act which all the faculties of our being spontaneously united in making. That after having made this act, we could look up and the heavens appeared to smile upon us more cheerfully, the stars to shine more brightly, and the earth seemed clothed with greater beauty. That instead of our sympathies being

cut off from our fellow-men, and our willingness to make sacrifices for their well-being diminished, we found ourselves prepared to put into execution what before was only upon our lips, and ready to make sacrifices which before we had scarcely imagined. This, we repeat, was our change. But alas, our companions remain the same !

They are still in the self-same place where at the setting out they were. They are still seeking for life, still looking for peace, and vainly striving to realize their truer destiny.

> "They cry for strength, remaining weak,
> And seem to find, but still to seek."*

They are conscious of energies which were never brought into action ; they have capacities, the objects of which they scarcely have even dreamt of ; and in their souls lie buried sources of life that till now remain unsealed.

Oh, could we but give them a glimpse of the soul under the immediate influence of divine grace, could we give to their hearts, only for a

* Tennyson.

moment, a taste of the divine love which Jesus Christ came to enkindle upon earth, could we get them to understand the possibility of the soul being filled with a pure, divine, and inexhaustible energy; then we should have given them some conception of the meaning and necessity of the Church, and accomplished the wish nearest to our heart.

But our brightest hopes regard the youth of our country, who have no instilled misconceptions of the truth, and who, when it is seen, have the loyalty to acknowledge, and the courage to embrace it. These have only to see the Catholic Church as she is, and they will exclaim: "Is this Catholicity, the Catholic Church! This is the realization of the silent hope, which we in solitude so fondly cherished, the bright dream that breaks upon our midnight slumbers, the object of all our striving, and the yearnings of our heart! We are Catholic; and at heart never were aught else. The truths we hold are but grains of sand from her temple; the impulses of our hearts are but drops of love from this boundless ocean spread before us."

All men, so far as their nature is not perverted,

are Catholics; and if they but knew their real wants, they would have to do violence to themselves not to enter the Catholic Church.

> "For truth hath such a face and such a mien,
> As to be loved, need only to be seen." *

For what else is the Church, but God made manifest to the hearts and minds of men;—his Body. To see the Catholic Church, therefore, is to have the brightest and fullest vision of the First-True, the First-Good, and the First-Beautiful; it is to have the brightest vision of Heaven that man can have upon earth,—it is to see God!

* Dryden.

XXX.

Conclusion.

"Am I not brave and strong? Am I not here
To fight and conquer? Have I not around
A world of comrades, bound to the same cause,
All brave as I—all led by the same chief,
All pledged to victory?"

MILNES.

MAN has a destiny,—his end is God,—his life is divine. Jesus Christ is the complement of man,—the restorer of the race. The Catholic Church is the manifestation of Jesus Christ,—the organ by which Jesus Christ perpetuates his life upon earth, and the organ of man's restoration, and nature's restoration through man.

The Catholic Church affords to man the opportunity of becoming Christian without violating the laws of his reason, without stifling the dictates of his conscience. She alone is able to guide man to his destiny,—she is adequate to all the wants of the human heart,—and in her religious orders she opens a pathway to those nobler souls who seek a perfect life.

This Church is here in the midst of us, but strange as it may seem, it is concealed from the minds of the American people, by ignorance, misrepresentation, and calumny, as effectually as if it were once more buried in the Catacombs. But will the Bride of Christ always remain thus hidden? We think not. There are already some who have caught glimpses of her true character; and we may hope that the day is not far distant when sons and daughters of our own people will vie with the early Christians in devotion, self-sacrifice, and saintly lives, and, if need be, in the testimony of their blood for the truth.

Indeed, it is an anomaly well worthy the attention of a reflecting mind, how a people, con-

stituted as we are, a practical and independent people, can still retain a purely speculative religion, like Protestantism; a religion without faith, without an altar, without a sacrifice, without a priesthood, without a sacrament, without authority, without any bond of union,—a religion utterly unpractical, and destitute even of material grandeur!

America presents to the mind, at the present epoch, one of the most interesting questions, and one too, of the greatest moment for the future destiny of man; the question, Whether the Catholic Church will succeed in Christianizing the American people as she has Christianized all European nations, so that the Cross of Christ will accompany the stars and stripes in our future?

We say that this question is fraught with great interest for the future of humanity. Our people are young, fresh, and filled with the idea of great enterprises; the people who, of all others, if once Catholic, can give a new, noble, and glorious realization to Christianity; a development which will go even beyond the past in achievements of zeal, in the abundance

of saints, as well as in art, science, and material greatness. The Catholic Church alone is able to give unity to a people, composed of such conflicting elements as ours, and to form them into a great nation.

The Church is the ever youthful bride of Christ. She is as pure, as bright, as fresh, as on the day of her birth. She can never fail. In her bosom are the inexhaustible sources of inspiration, strength, courage, holiness.

"Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and
Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled." *

Youth of America! Here is opened to you a new, a noble, a divine career. Here is a God-like enterprise. An enterprise worthy of your energies, and glorious for your country.

"Tyre of the West!
Whose eagle wings thine own green world o'erspread,
Touching two oceans;— * * * *

* Byron.

O while thou yet hast room, fair fruitful land,
Ere war and want have stain'd thy virgin sod,
Mark thee a place on high, a glorious stand,
Whence Truth her sign may make o'er forest, lake, and strand." *

† Lyra Apos.

THE END.

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